

MAGNET AXIOM & MAGNET DVR EXAMINER

How Greensboro Police Get Criminals Off Streets Faster With Digital Forensic Tools

“The quicker you get to a case, the quicker you put away the criminals and help the victims.”

— Detective Matthew Kraft, Greensboro Police Department

The Challenge

On Task and Under Pressure

There was a six month backlog.

Though things have changed in the decade since he joined the Criminal Investigation Division of the Greensboro Police Department as a forensic examiner, Detective Matthew Kraft recalls early challenges with a wince:

“It was horrible,” he says. “We were doing investigations only to find out they were already dealt with in court. We were wasting our time.”

Though Detective Kraft and his partner developed a process to mitigate the effects of the backlog, they continue to face an ever-growing volume of incoming devices and limited time for examination.



Greensboro Police Department partners with its citizens to make the city safe for all people.

Serves almost 300,000 citizens over 135 square miles.

Employs close to 680 sworn law enforcement officers, 115 non-sworn employees.

CHALLENGES

- Constant stream of incoming devices tied to serious crimes
- Collection of enough evidence for prosecution without causing bottlenecks

SOLUTIONS

- Magnet AXIOM to analyze digital evidence regardless of data acquisition tool
- Magnet DVR Examiner to recover video and metadata from CCTV and surveillance DVRs

RESULTS

- Accelerates arrests with fast, easy digital evidence recovery and analysis
- Aids prosecution with clear, effective reporting
- Increases proactive policing with reliable data



Supporting cases from vandalism to homicide, the duo takes in devices from the third largest police department in North Carolina, as well as the fire department and other smaller agencies that don't have internal digital forensics operations. When a case involved surveillance DVR video, they often traveled on-site; detectives and clerks don't always know how to pull the data to send for analysis.

“Our biggest challenge is staying ahead of the game,” Detective Kraft notes. “We run a thorough investigation and examination, but with devices coming in so fast, it's hard to do.”

He describes his job as a constant balancing act: busy digging into a computer to find relevant information for a fraud case, then receiving a cell phone tied to a murder. It can be challenging to optimize collection, gathering enough evidence for prosecution before moving to the next device, Detective Kraft relates, though he knows one thing for sure: timing is crucial.

How Magnet Forensics Solutions Help

Digital Forensics Tools Boost Efficiency

With dedicated personnel and modern tools, the Greensboro Police Department now moves faster to get violent offenders off the streets before they can cause more harm to citizens or property.

Detective Kraft says digital forensics solutions from Magnet Forensics help him and his partner dig for evidence easier and faster, uncovering the truth—sometimes even more than first expected—then tackling the next case.



If we can't be efficient back here, all we're doing is drowning," Detective Kraft says. "That's why Magnet digital forensics tools are extremely important to our work."

Several years ago, Greensboro Police Department started using Magnet AXIOM to recover and analyze digital evidence, automating aspects of investigation and streamlining communication with stakeholders.

For instance, when an ICAC case comes in, Detective Kraft leverages Magnet.AI to quickly detect potential CSAM or other images of nudity or bedrooms. There is no time wasted calling detectives for specific locations.



"AXIOM is easy to use. We know we can get data in and out efficiently," Detective Kraft notes. "With its consistent improvements, AXIOM has become our number one tool over other solutions."

Having used AXIOM to analyze digital evidence for years, Detective Kraft decided to test the ability of Magnet DVR Examiner to recover video and metadata from CCTV and surveillance DVRs. "That DVR Examiner is a blessing. I can finally view DVR hard drives and it's so easy," he relates, noting the tool proved essential to investigating three cases within its first two weeks of use, even helping to solve a homicide case by capturing video of the crime itself and providing a clear image of the shooter's face.

"If you understand digital forensics, you can sit down and start using DVR Examiner immediately. You don't need two weeks of training," Detective Kraft says.

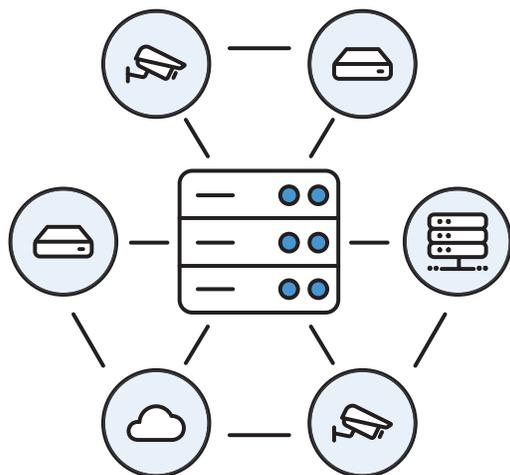
Acting Fast, With Reliability

In the aforementioned homicide case, quick review of the DVR hard disk helped Greensboro Police Department arrest the perpetrator within days. By using the analytical features of Magnet AXIOM, such as Timeline, Detective Kraft and his partner carry the same efficiency to more complex investigations, staying one step ahead of incoming devices and ensuring examinations are relevant for investigation and prosecution.

“It’s important that we get to evidence quickly because most cases are time sensitive,” he explains. “The quicker you get to a case, the quicker you put away the criminals and help the victims.”

Keeping citizens safe is at the heart of all efforts at the Greensboro Police Department: its commitment to modern technology and equipment is not driven by flashy gadgetry, but by cost-effective tools from trusted vendors that maintain transparency and benefit the community.

Among other capabilities backed by AXIOM and DVR Examiner, usability and reliability stand out.



Ease of Use

According to Detective Kraft, pre-tagging images using Magnet.AI is the number one feature in AXIOM that accelerates his investigative process and enables crime prevention. It is useful for flagging certain photos right away, whether its nudity, guns, or other case-relevant images.

In fact, AXIOM helps instigate new cases when images within the initial search warrant suggest other criminal activity, he says.

In one case, investigators received a tip that a substitute teacher at a local school was selling drugs to students. During the narcotics investigation, they discovered students were exchanging sexual favors for the drugs. As Detective Kraft employed AXIOM to recover and analyze photographic evidence, it became apparent the child abuse was not an isolated incident.



If we open up more doors and get charges, then we’re shutting down things that we didn’t even know about that can put career criminals away,” Detective Kraft notes. “We are doing a better job of being proactive against crime.”

In that case, Detective Kraft identified more victims and gave the prosecutors stronger evidence to put the prior teacher in jail.

For DVR work, Detective Kraft became an instant fan of features within DVR Examiner that allow him to obtain whole hash values and channels as well as correct times for taking to court. Even for users without a technical background, DVR Examiner allows quick review of evidence and addition of locations, devices, and sources. It even enables acquisition of data from damaged DVRs.

Effective reporting

Detective Kraft says output from AXIOM fortifies clear communication in court with flexible export options and templates. “One of the most important things we do is make evidence presentable to the average person,” he says.

“Officers understand technical jargon, but once we send reports to an attorney to place in front of a jury, it’s got to make sense, or you can lose it all.”

DVR Examiner also supports reporting in a format with video alongside proof the evidence is forensically sound. For all solutions and work, ensuring evidence is trusted and easy to understand motivates Detective Kraft.



That’s what I enjoy, finding that little piece of crucial data that can close a case or at least show how a detective moved from A to B in an investigation.”

Serving as Silent Heroes

In the hands of experts like Detective Kraft, digital forensics tools support public safety, even as they work behind the scenes. “Once we send out examinations, we don’t usually hear back,” Detective Kraft notes.

Still, in a memorable instance, a homicide detective reached out to him about a text message exchange Detective Kraft had discovered and reported using AXIOM for a homicide case. That effective reporting made it easy to understand the timing and content of messages between the shooter and the victim.

“I’ll never forget that conversation,” Detective Kraft says. “The detective was so thankful. It changed his mind set of wanting to look at phone and computer information before doing interviews because it opens up how to conduct them.”

To other agencies conducting digital forensics, Detective Kraft recommends Magnet Forensics solutions as a staple needed in every office.

“If you don’t have Magnet tools, you’re missing out on ease and effectiveness,” he says. “Unlike other products, I know we have an anchor of support with Magnet.”



Detective Matthew Kraft
Greensboro Police Department

Learn more about the products featured here visit magnetforensics.com/magnet-axiom and magnetforensics.com/magnet-dvr-examiner

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