The Chain Of Custody: A Big Misconception

By

Tobias Eggendorfer

Presented At

The Digital Forensic Research Conference

DFRWS 2015 USA Philadelphia, PA (Aug 9th - 13th)

Chain of custody & Preservation of evidence: biggest misconception in IT forensics?

Prof. Dr. Tobias Eggendorfer
Hochschule
Ravensburg-Weingarten
Technik | Wirtschaft | Sozialwesen

IT forensics - current „teaching“

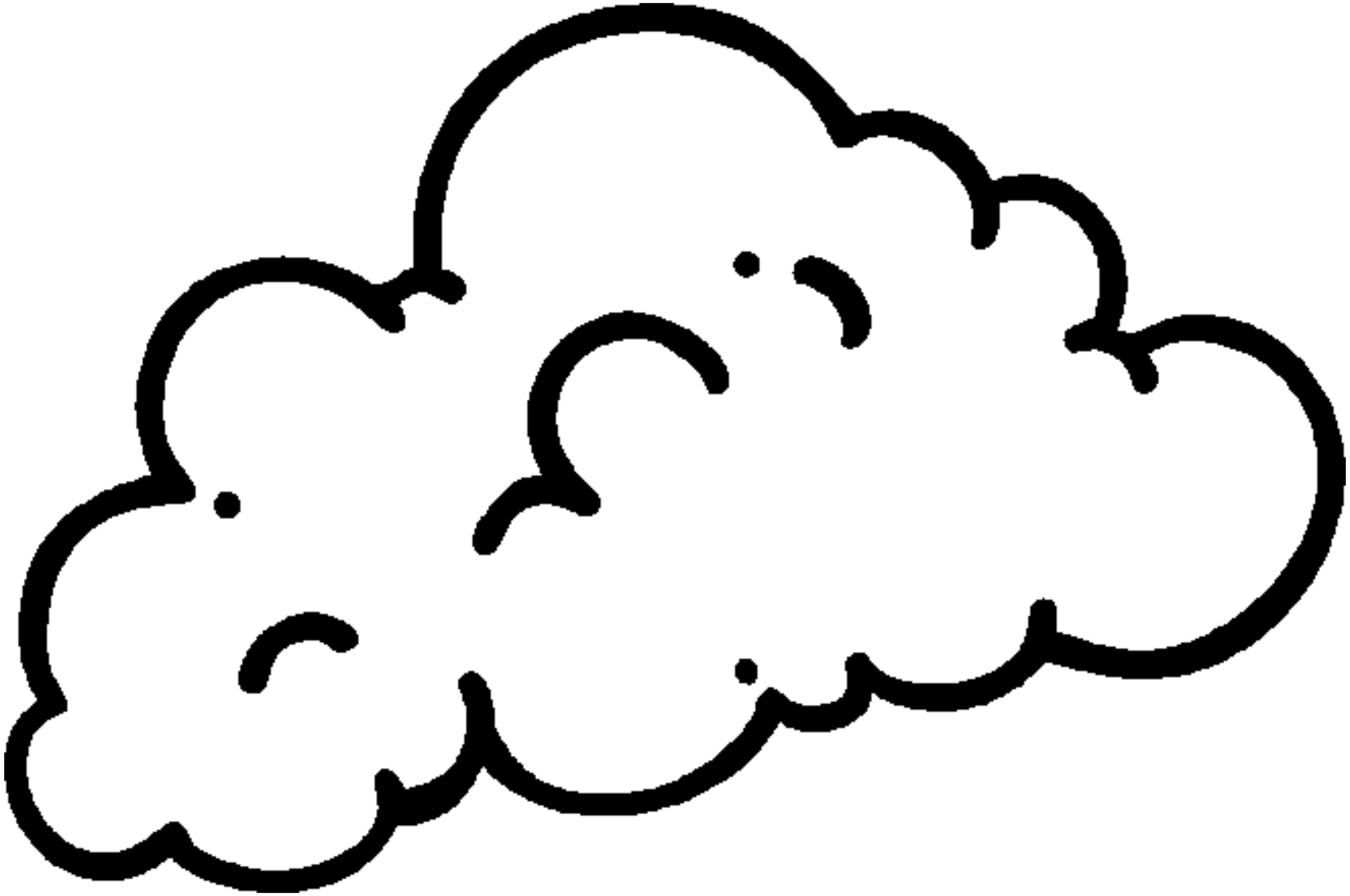
- Copy the hard disk
- Work on the copy

Nothing wrong, when examining this:

Except for the amount of data.

- That‘s why
  - Jonathan Grier tried to reduce the amount
  - Bradley Schatz optimised formats to increase transfer speeds

But impossible for



However: It is attempted.

Reasons:

Evidence needs to be available.

It needs to copied so it cannot be tampered with.

But how do other forensics sciences solve this?

Can‘t keep it forever.

What if only wounded?

- Stitch it up?
- Or keep it - just in case?

Add some explosives to keep it going?

How do they do it?

- Write a report, have someone sign it
- Maybe
  - add photos or sketches
  - keep some pieces

And why?

- Their evidence can‘t be copied
- It won‘t last forever

We don‘t always investigate the „really nasty“ stuff.

Why aren‘t we doing this?

- We copy extensive amounts of data.
- We compromise privacy by doing so.
- We waste millions of GByte.
- We waste time.

Who said we have to do it this way?

My suggestion:

- Prefer live forensics over post-mortem
- Get rid of copying
- Reduce data (Triage)
  - Keep only what‘s necessary
- Run the risk of case blowing up in court if it‘s not „a big thing“

Thank you

tobias.eggendorfer@hs-weingarten.de