

“Back It Up!”

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No, this is not an article about a new rap tune. Instead, this article comes from numerous observations in my studies in the area of Cell Phone Data Recovery. Just the other day, I received another distress call, this time from an IT Manager of a company in Arizona. His boss had acquired a new Blackberry phone and the IT man was in the process of trying to transfer the boss' information from the older Blackberry phone to the newer one. Little did he know what was about to happen. The older Blackberry required a Security Code to “open” the phone. It was a code the boss had purposely placed on the phone to keep unwanted eyes from seeing his information. My guy thought he had 10 tries to input the code ... wrong. This particular Blackberry series only gave you 4 tries. After entering the incorrect code on try #4, the doomed ‘hourglass’ appeared and my guy knew he was up crap creek with out a paddle.

That's when he found me and I got the call: “Can this information be extracted?” he asked. All of his boss' contacts, appointments, emails, etc had gone to the ‘grave of deletion’ and now I was asked to save the day. Darn! My Superman cape was in the cleaners! I thought I knew the answer, but with over 950 models of cell phones out there, there is just no way to stay up on each model and to know what can and cannot be done with each one. So I consulted with my group of experts. After climbing my Tibet mountain and requesting the wisdom of my gurus, the verdict came in. Just what I had

thought....I placed my hat over my heart and started playing TAPS! That information was dead in the water with no hope of recovery.

Well, hold it! Can't a Cellular Forensic Examiner find deleted info? Yes and No, it all depends on the phone, the user and other critical factors. Just because it's in the abyss of the memory chip doesn't always mean you will get it back intact. Let me explain it this way: try this little experiment. Take a blank sheet of paper and label it "memory." On the paper write your name in pencil. Now erase it. Repeat this 15 times, each time with a different name, erasing each name until name number 15. Now, using the side of the pencil, rub the pencil back and forth shading the area you were writing on. What do you see? Do you see your name? No. That, my friends, is the way it is with deleted data. If you can keep the original deleted data from being overwritten, there is a chance of retrieving what was deleted. But when that deleted data is constantly being "overwritten" by other data, the original is gone.

So how could this have been prevented? What could have been done to save this information? Two words...BACK UP. Many of today's cell phone makers provide backup software for the owner to use on their personal computers. Many of these programs are free. So where do you find this software? Go to your cell phone maker's website, type in the model of the phone and see if they made a backup or desktop "syncing" software for it. If not, check for a third party company that makes one. Unfortunately, for my guy, his boss never loaded the included software when he got his Blackberry and so he never backed it up on his computer.

Backing up your cell phone's information is not only safe, it's smart. One never knows when he might drop his phone in a toilet or on a pavement. Backing up a cell phone will help preserve your valuable information should a crisis arise.

By the way, I wonder if my IT guy in Arizona still has a job?

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