# Cellebrite and Other Digital Investigative Techniques





# Edgar Fritz

- Bachelor's degree in Applied Mathematics
- FBI for 20 years
  - Surveillance Specialist
  - Analyst for violent crime squad
  - Field Photographer
    - Member of FAVP
    - Member of ERT
- Master's in Digital Media Forensics
- Digital Forensic Examiner for 3 years



# So, what <u>IS</u> Digital Forensics?

"Digital Forensics is a branch of Forensic Science that focuses on identifying, acquiring, imaging, processing, analyzing, preserving, and reporting on data stored electronically"



# Why acquire a phone?

- Beyond call detail records
- Associated applications
  - Communications
  - Images/Videos
  - Location related
  - Databases
- Certain data may reside ONLY on devices
  - Text messages
  - Detailed system data or health-related data
  - Device event
  - Screen orientation

# Cell Phones....Aren't they all the same?



# How do you "image" a phone?

- Special hardware and software required
- Technical skills and certification
- Not like imaging a computer, where we remove the hard drive
- Different level of extractions

## What is to preserve a phone?

- So, before you say:
  - "We've imaged everything"
  - "We downloaded the phone, so we've got it"
  - "Give me everything"
- Understand the type of extraction (or extractions) you have, and the limitations

#### Phone memory

- Solid state or "flash" memory chips
- No spinning HD inside phones
- Important to understand concepts:
  - "Wear leveling"
  - "Garbage collection"
- Phone data is 1) fragmented, but 2) efficient
  - Large deleted files typically disposed of quickly
  - Smaller deleted files and fragments, however, may be recoverable
  - Data stored in databases

## Phone memory

- Can't fully image phone without writing to flash memory
  - Using phone's own operating system
  - Using "boot loader" added to system by extraction device
    - Deleted upon completion

What kind of extractions exist?

**Manual** Logical File System **Advanced Logical Full File System Physical Chip-Off** Hex Dumping/JTAG Micro-Read

#### Manual

**Basic extraction** 

Copying files from the device to a computer

Only access to user data

Process changes metadata

Cannot recover deleted data

#### Manual

- Manual is the most basic
- Can be as simple as taking pictures of the phone screen
- Doesn't include any deleted files or unused/unallocated memory space

# Logical

Communicating with device operating system using API (Application Programming Interface)

Call logs/Text messages

Application data

Selective process

Cannot recover deleted data

#### Logical Extraction

- Logical extraction is an extraction of the then-active files and file system/databases
- Doesn't include many deleted files or unused/unallocated memory space
  - Unless small/stored in SQLite databases
  - SMS messages, contacts, notes files, call records

File System Similar to Logical but doesn't require API

Direct access to internal memory

Database and System files

Web browsing/app usage

Can recover deleted data

## File System

- **File System** is an extraction used to target specific types of data, such as documents, email messages, or photos, rather than the entire contents of the device's storage
- Doesn't include many deleted files or unused/unallocated memory space

# Advanced Logical

Combines both the Logical and File System extractions

Call logs/Text messages

**Application Data** 

Not a selective process on iPhone

Cannot recover deleted data

# **Advanced Logical**

- Advanced Logical is an extraction of the then-active files and file system/databases
- Process gathers all data on iPhones
- Can be selective on Androids

Full File System Complete copy of file system

Requires additional Hardware

Database and System files

Third party applications

Can recover deleted data

# Full File System

- Full File System is an extraction that goes beyond the user data
- Can include some deleted files
- Third Party applications
- Email

# Physical

Recover hidden or deleted information

Bit-for-bit replica of flash memory

Can bypass system locks and passcodes

Does not leave a trace of being used

Can recover deleted data

# Physical Extractions

- Physical extraction is a capture of ALL 1's and o's on hard disk or phone – the "binary" file
  - Can recover deleted data
  - Potentially other items not retrievable by logical extraction scripts

# What if Phone is Damaged/Won't Power On?

- Extract Binary File from Flash Chip
- Via the circuit board, a "JTAG" extraction
- "Chip-off" physically remove chip from circuit board and read binary file
- Which can then be ingested into forensic software such as Cellebrite for processing
- Doesn't work on devices with default encryption

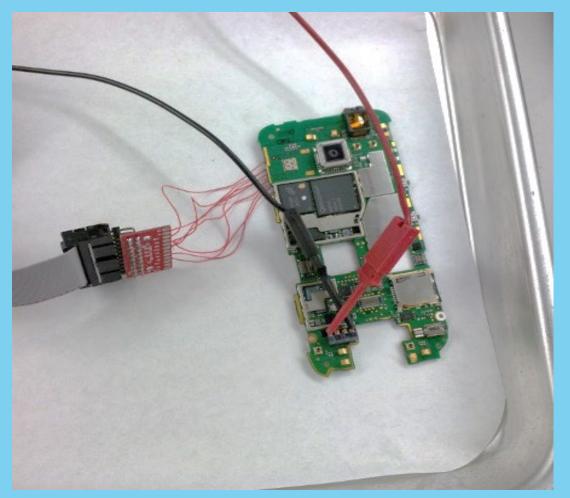
## CHIP-OFF





 Technique where the flash memory chip is physically removed from the device's circuit board to extract data

#### **JTAG**



• Technique involves connecting to the phone's Test Access Ports (TAPs) (JTAG port) and using specialized software to transfer raw data from the memory chips.

# MICRO-READ



 Technique involves physically examining the memory chip using an electron microscope to read the data stored on it.

## Why not Physical every time?

- iPhone (4s and above) full-disk encryption
  - Apple's chips encrypt unallocated space on a phone
  - So when you delete a file/text, the area occupied by that file is encrypted and rendered unreadable
- Cannot access data without passcode or decryption key
- Same on Samsung Galaxy S6, Note 5 and newer
- Jailbreak iPhone is not common
- Rooted Android is not common

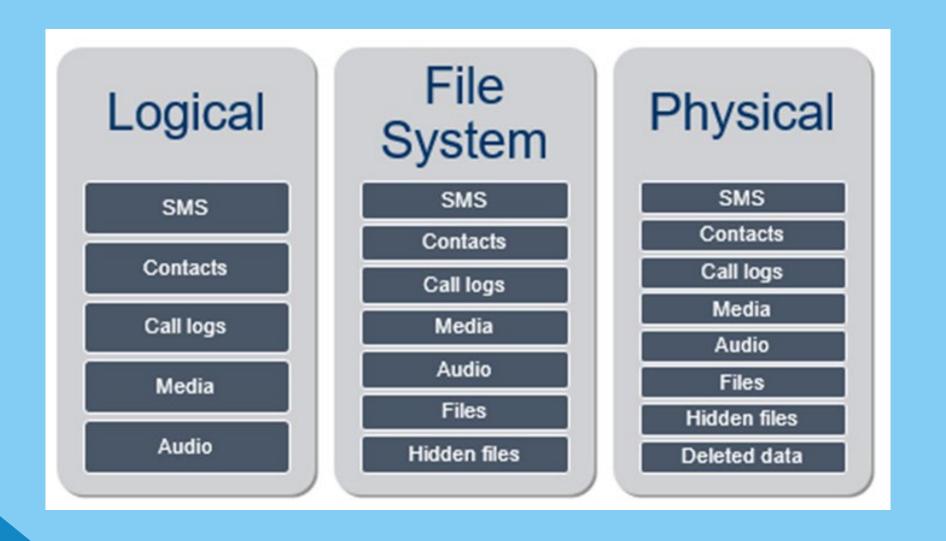
#### What can be recovered?

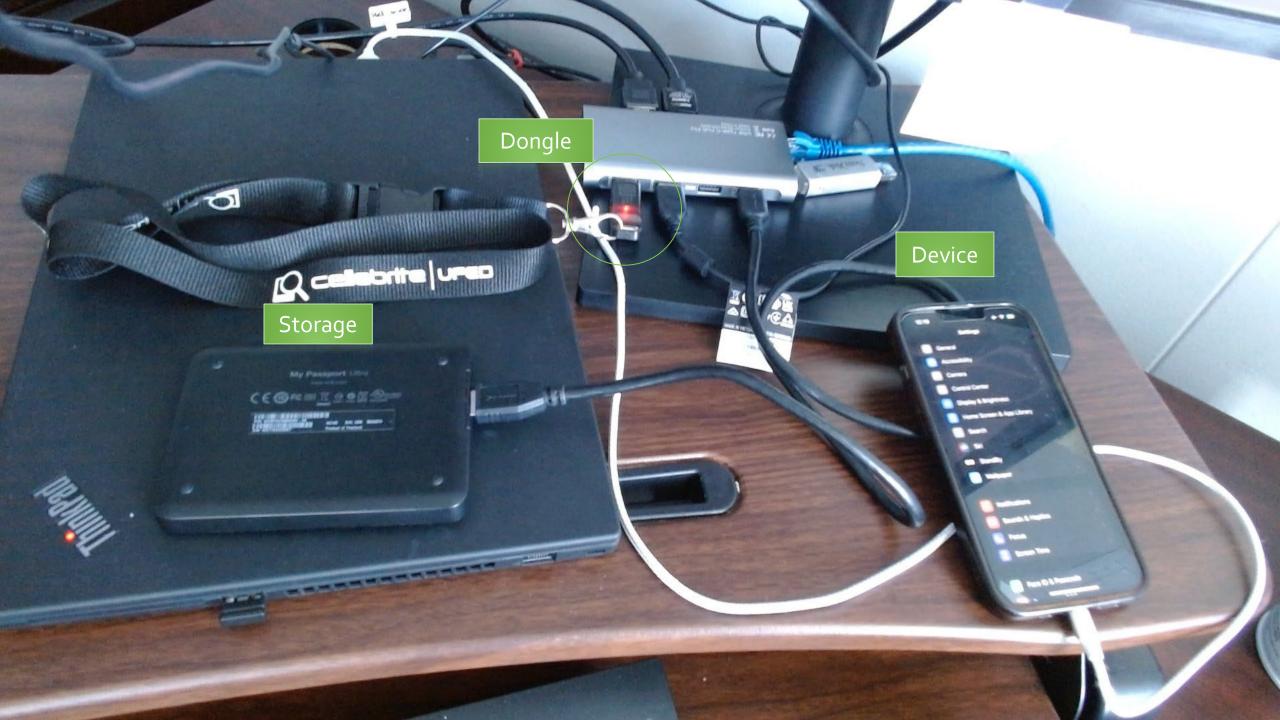
- Call logs (incoming, outgoing, missed)
- Pictures (including location)
- Texts/iMessages/"Chats"
- E-mail
- Browsing History
- GPS/cell site data
- Certain app data
- Malware scans/analysis
- Databases

# Cellebrite Support Matrix

earch		Device Vendor			Marketing Name			Model			
Q Search		Sea	rch or choose an opt	ion 🔻	Search	or choose an option	•	Search or cl	hoose an option 🔻		Expan
Device		V Device Model V		Chipset		Device OS Version	Latest Security Patch Level		Extraction V Method	Last Reported Date	~ F
Samsung	Galaxy S23 U	Iltra	SM-S9180	KALAMA		N/A			Full file system	2025-04-14	7
Samsung Galaxy S9			SM-G960U1	SDM845		10	2022-03-01		Full file system	2025-04-14	7
Samsung Galaxy A12			SM-A125U	MT6765V/CA		12	2023-07-01		Full file system	2025-04-14	7
Samsung Galaxy A13			SM-A135M	EXYNOS850		14.0		Full file system	2025-04-14	1	
Apple	N/A		N104AP	N/A		16.1.2		iOS_Full_Filesyste m	2025-04-14	7	
Samsung	amsung Galaxy S20+ 5G		SM-G986U	SM8250		13		Full file system	2025-04-14	7	
Samsung Galaxy S24			SM-S921B	ERD9945		N/A		Full file system	2025-04-14	7	
Samsung	N/A		SM-S135DL	MT6765V	//CB	N/A			Full file system	2025-04-14	7
Apple	N/A		D53gAP	N/A		17.4.1			iOS_Full_Filesyste m	2025-04-14	7
Apple	N/A		D73AP	N/A		17.6.1 (21G93)			iOS_Full_Filesyste	2025-04-14	1

#### What do we get with each type of extractions?



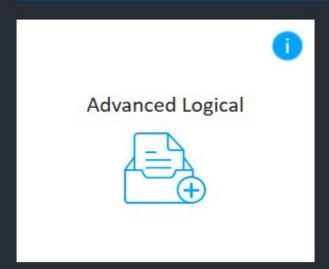


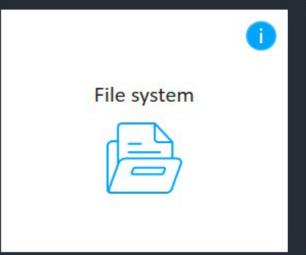




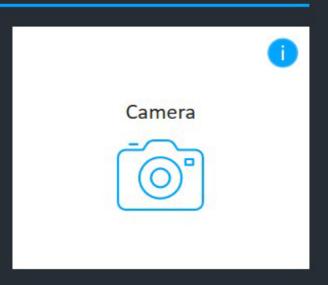


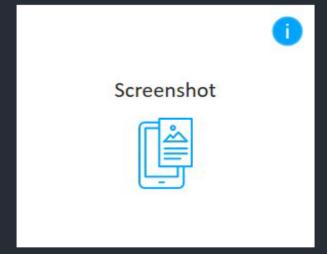
#### SAMSUNG GSM SM-S916U GALAXY S23+ USB cable 170 or Original Cable

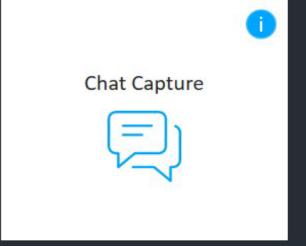




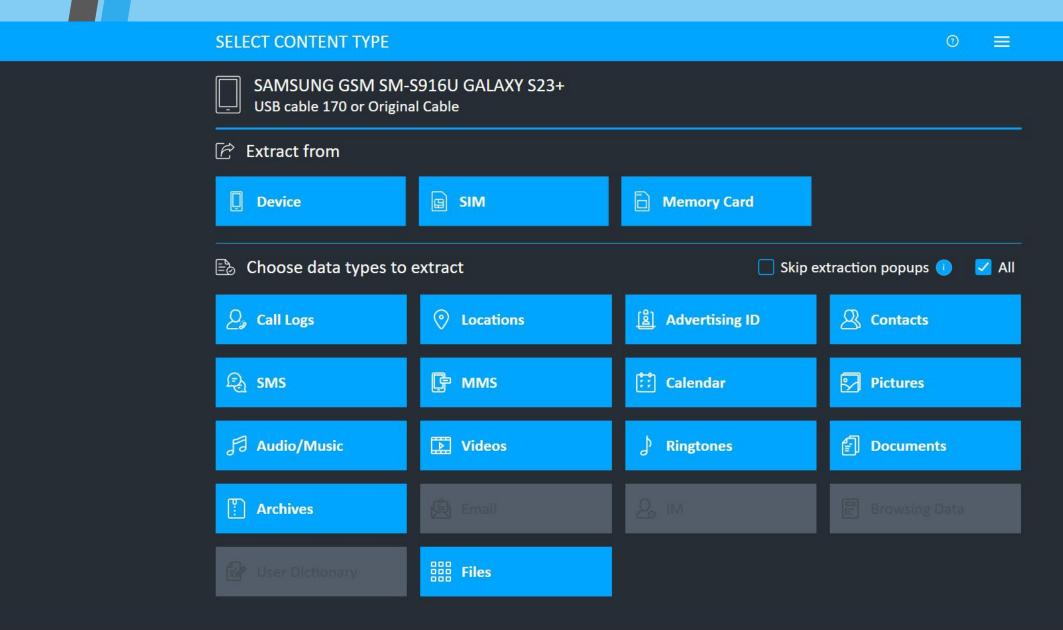








# Advanced Logical extraction on Samsung

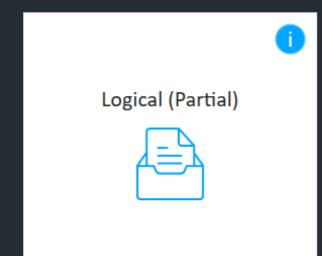


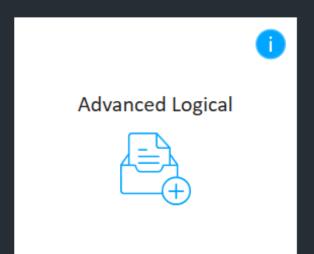


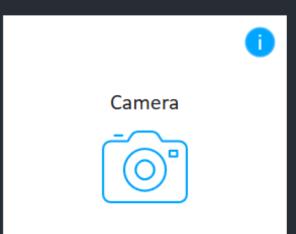


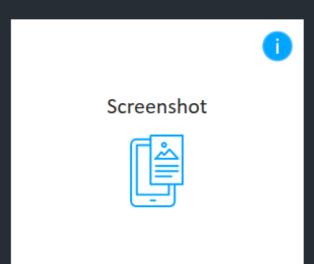


#### APPLE A2482 IPHONE 13 USB cable 210 or Original Cable









# Advanced Logical extraction on iPhone

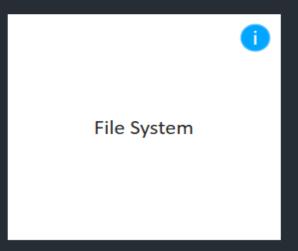
#### **SELECT MODE**







APPLE A2482 IPHONE 13 USB cable 210 or Original Cable









APPLE A2482 IPHONE 13 USB cable 210 or Original Cable



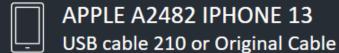
**Extraction to Local Drive** 

 $G: \\ \ \ \, \text{G:} \\ \ \ \,$ 









Connect the source device to the USB port on the computer. If the device is already connected, disconnect and then reconnect the device.

#### A2482 iPhone 13:

Before starting the extraction, you must set the screen timeout to Never.

Note:

For iOS 18.2 and above: Disable Stolen Device Protection from the device settings or remove the passcode/FaceID completely.

Settings  $\rightarrow$  FaceID&Passcode  $\rightarrow$  Stolen Device Protection  $\rightarrow$  Turn off.

If the device is already jailbroken\*\*, a more thorough extraction can be performed.

\*\*The Cydia third-party app and the Apple File Conduit "2" addon must be pre-installed.

Don't touch any button on the device during the extraction.

Devices running Mobile Device Management (MDM) may experience unexpected behavior. It is recommend not to perform extractions for these devices.

MDM is specified under device settings.

Before connecting, disable Auto-Lock on the device:

for iOS 2.x - 9.3.5:

Settings  $\rightarrow$  General  $\rightarrow$  Auto-Lock  $\rightarrow$  select "Never" and return to Home screen.

for iOS 10.0 and higher:

Settings  $\rightarrow$  Display and Brightness  $\rightarrow$  Auto-Lock  $\rightarrow$  select "Never" and return to Home screen.

To allow device connection:

Battery should be fully charged

- 1. Power on the device and wait until it's fully booted.
- 2. Insert SIM card if required by the phone to boot.
- 3. Connect the device to the Inseyets UFED.
- 4. Press Continue.





#### APPLE A2482 IPHONE 13

USB cable 210 or Original Cable

Please wait, this can take some time...



Please Wait... Connecting







# APPLE A2482 IPHONE 13 USB cable 210 or Original Cable

Please wait, this can take some time...



#### **Backup Encryption**

To extract user credentials from an iOS device, backup encryption should be enabled (encryption is automatically disabled at the end of a successful extraction).

Enable backup encryption? (Inseyets UFED will temporary set the password to "1234".)

NO

YES







#### APPLE A2482 IPHONE 13 USB cable 210 or Original Cable

Please wait, this can take some time...



#### **iTunes Password**

This device has iTunes backup encryption. The password is required for collecting data. If you know the password, click OK.

**ABORT** 

OK





#### APPLE A2482 IPHONE 13 USB cable 210 or Original Cable

Please wait, this can take some time...



/.b/6/Containers/Data/Application/9DA2A1E4-6312-4A7F-A89A-31D9FAEB9733/Library/WebKit/WebsiteData/Default/rk6sG5uQtlKUp94FLF0CkPTcP5mPihh5MlhJXFLH8Ds/rk6sG5uQtlKUp94FLF0CkPTcP5mPihh5MlhJXFLH8Ds/CacheStorage/Version 16/Records/11599AB1392DBBDE7979A08AC64519646EA556F0/31cc1592-c1f3-4e99-96c3-df0da07fe288/86CE5D3D96515F3C6D63BDC52730FA43E541746F-blob

## Full File System extraction

- Is phone Make/Model/Operating System supported?
- Device State (Hot or Cold)



### What state are we in?



AFU(HOT)

After First Unlock

State of the device once the passcode has been entered for the first time. Most of the data is accessible and decrypted.

Unlocked



BFU(COLD)

Before First Unlock

State after the phone reboots and the password hasn't been entered. Most data is securely encrypted and cannot be accessed.

Locked



Welcome to Inseyets UFED

To perform advanced access, choose an operating system

Search Supported Devices







#### Select if the device is locked or unlocked







Android > Unlocked

#### **Preparation steps**

01 Connect Turbo Link to computer.

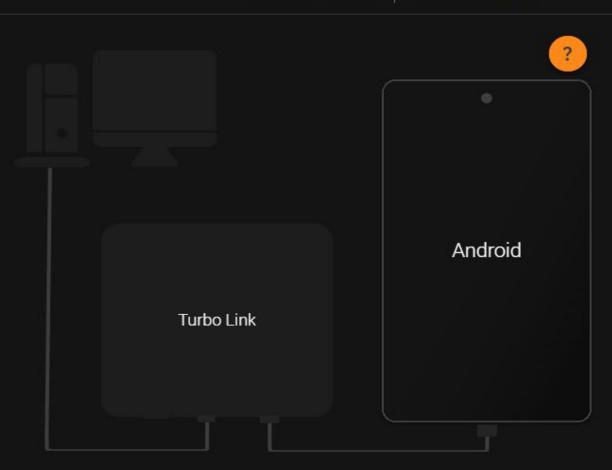


02 Initializing the Turbo Link environment.

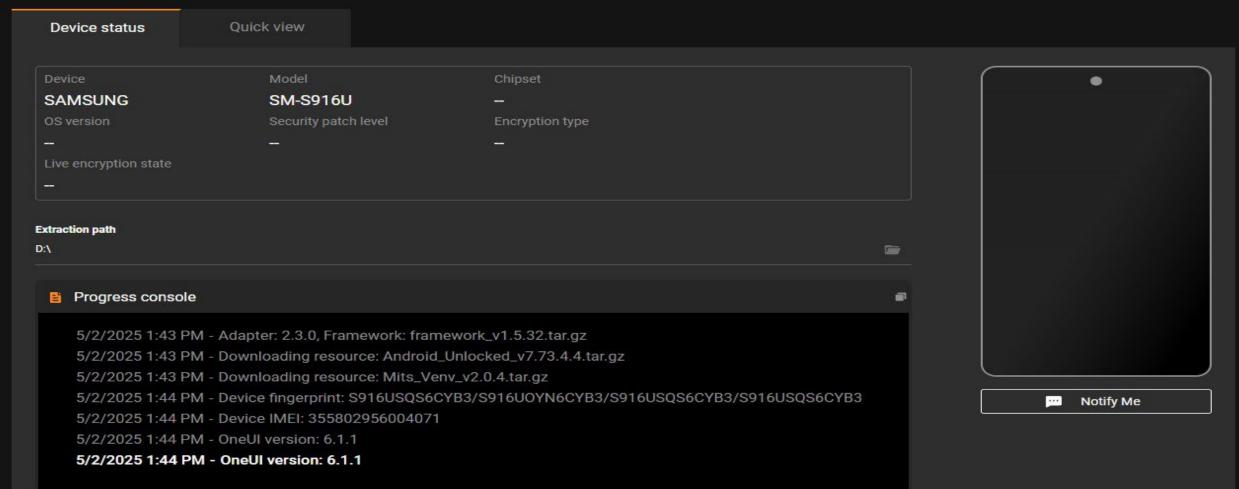


03 Connect device to Turbo Link.





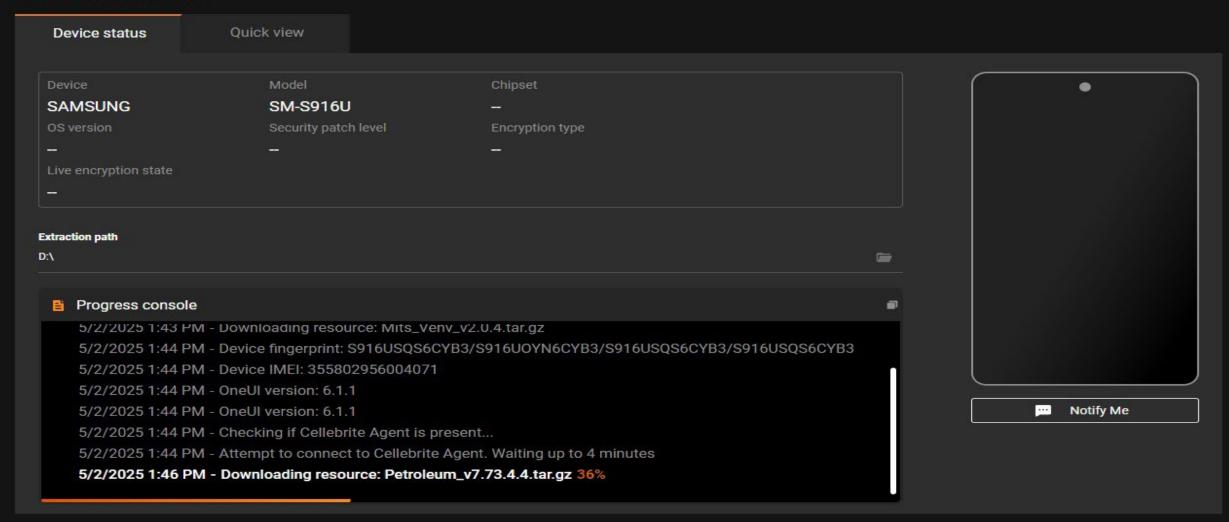
#### Initializing...



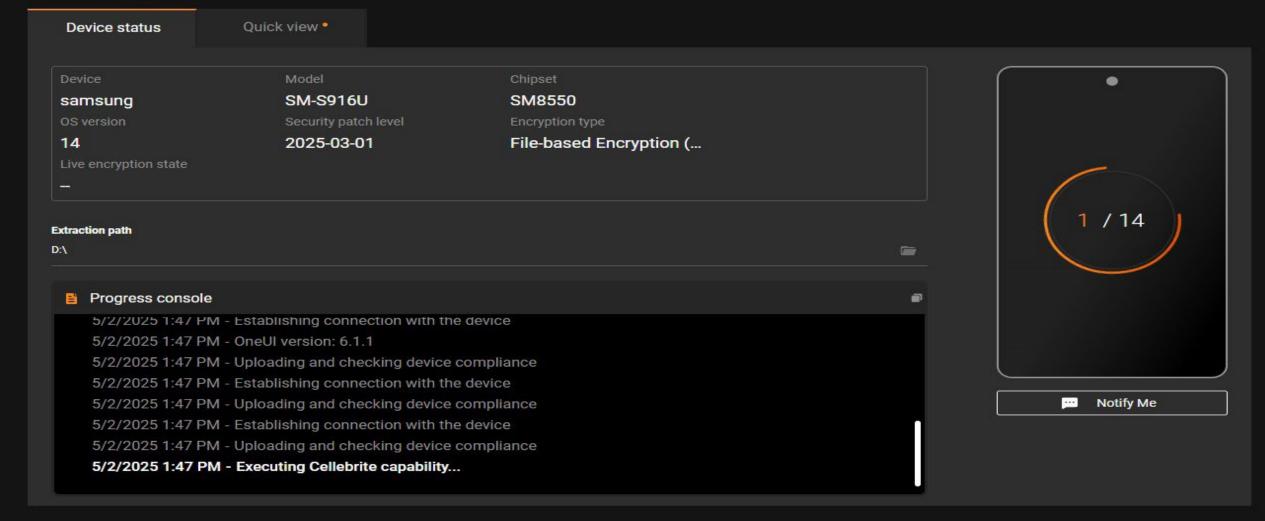


Android > Unlocked

#### Initial Access...

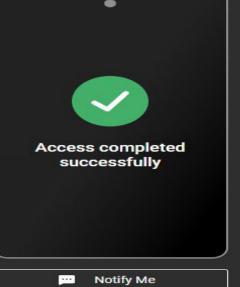


#### **Executing Consent Method...**



#### Select an action

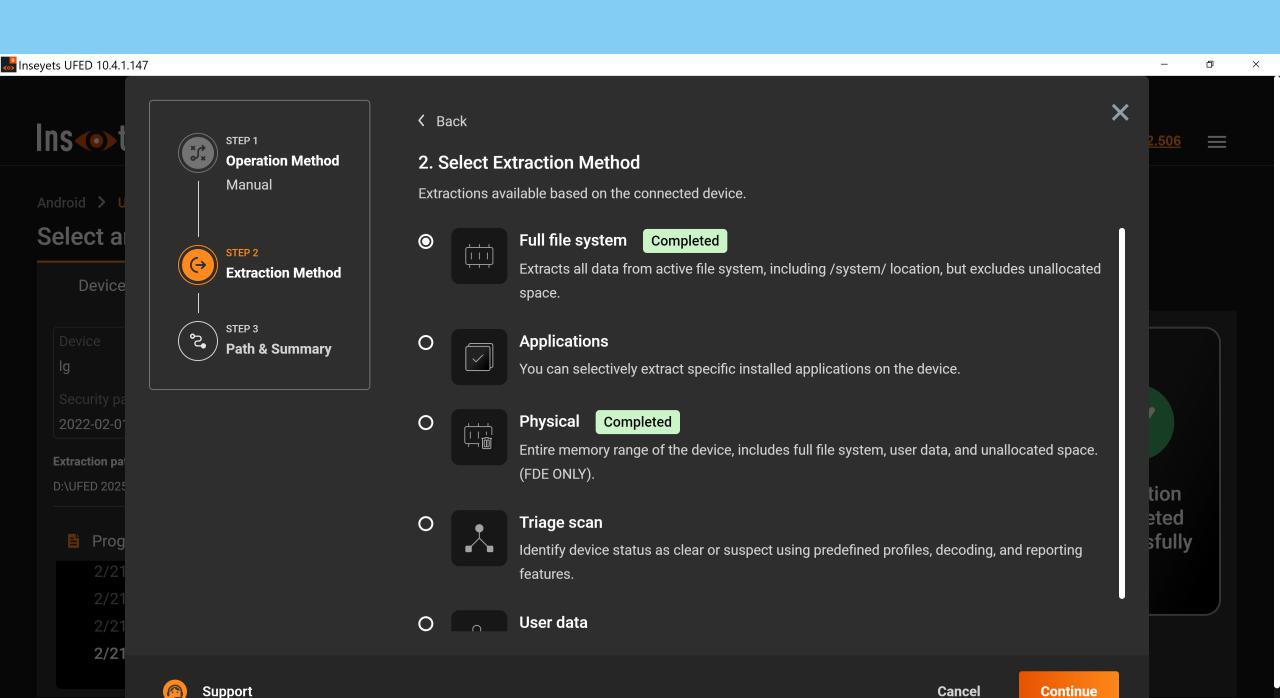




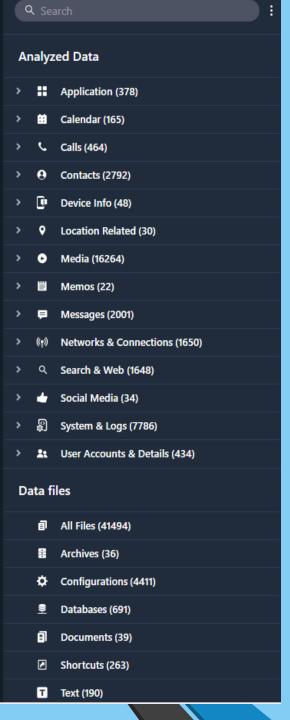
Cancel

Continue

Support





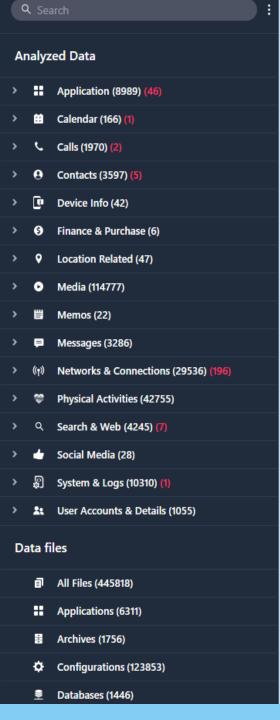


#### Cellebrite Phone Extraction

Apple iPhone 16 Pro iOS 18.2.1

Advanced Logical (iTunes backup)

Full File System Add-on tool (Mobile Elite)



Data	VeraKey	Advanced Logical
Activity Sensor Data	23756 (0)	23757 (0)
Aggregated Application Usage	14 (0)	
Applications Usage Log	29 (0)	
Autofill	4 (4)	4 (4)
Calendar	652 (269)	408 (25)
Call Log	471 (105)	237 (0)
Cell Towers	14 (14)	
Chats	956 (1)	923 (0)
Contacts	1250 (1)	1203 (1)
Cookies	602 (0)	416 (0)
Device Connectivity	1727 (616)	1111 (0)
Device Events	33 (0)	1 (0)
Device Locations	3604 (1599)	1690 (0)
Devices	21 (0)	
Emails	5105 (2)	267 (0)
Installed Applications	221 (0)	205 (0)
Instant Messages	8638 (0)	230 (0)
Log Entries	9658 (1)	9622 (1)
Notes	88 (5)	83 (0)
Passwords	1136 (0)	528 (0)
Recordings	1(1)	1(1)
Searched Items	15058 (1948)	90 (0)
User Accounts	20 (0)	16 (0)
Web Bookmarks	39 (0)	39 (0)
Web History	67370 (9574)	204 (0)
Wireless Networks	119 (0)	119 (0)
Applications	3477 (0)	
Archives	2910 (0)	219 (0)
Audio	24057 (0)	591 (0)
Configurations	204088 (0)	3607 (0)
Databases	1784 (0)	305 (0)
Documents	4099 (0)	14 (0)
Exchange	4764 (0)	
Images	88545 (1)	19206 (0)
Shortcuts	1 (0)	
Text	19016 (0)	124 (0)
Uncategorized	295623 (30)	3150 (0)
Videos	4313 (0)	808 (0)
User Dictionary		18 (0)

Figure 1: Data Point Comparison FFS vs AL

# VeraKey FFS vs Advanced Logical

Calendar	652 (269)	408 (25)
Call Log	471 (105)	237 (0)
Cell Towers	14 (14)	
Chats	956 (1)	923 (0)
Contacts	1250 (1)	1203 (1)
Cookies	602 (0)	416 (0)
Device Connectivity	1727 (616)	1111 (0)
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Web Bookmarks	39 (0)	39 (0)
Web History	67370 (9574)	204 (0)
Miroloss Notworks	110 (0)	110 (0)

COMMUNICATION	175
Apple Contacts - iOS	10
<ul> <li>Discord Messages</li> </ul>	17
Facebook Messenger Messages	1
Facebook Messenger Users Contacted	15
GroupMe Accounts	1
■ iOS Call Logs	1
ios iMessage/SMS/MMS	11
iOS Messages Preferences	1
iOS TextNow Chat	49
iOS TextNow Contacts	12
iOS TextNow Groups	5
iOS TextNow Profile	1
	6
<ul> <li>Signal Local User</li> </ul>	1
O Signal Messages - iOS	2
O Signal Stories	5
O Signal Users	5
Snapchat Chat Messages	19
Snapchat Contacts	4
Snapchat Memories	1
■ TextPlus Messages	1
Viber Messages	7

# Magnet FFS vs Advanced Logical

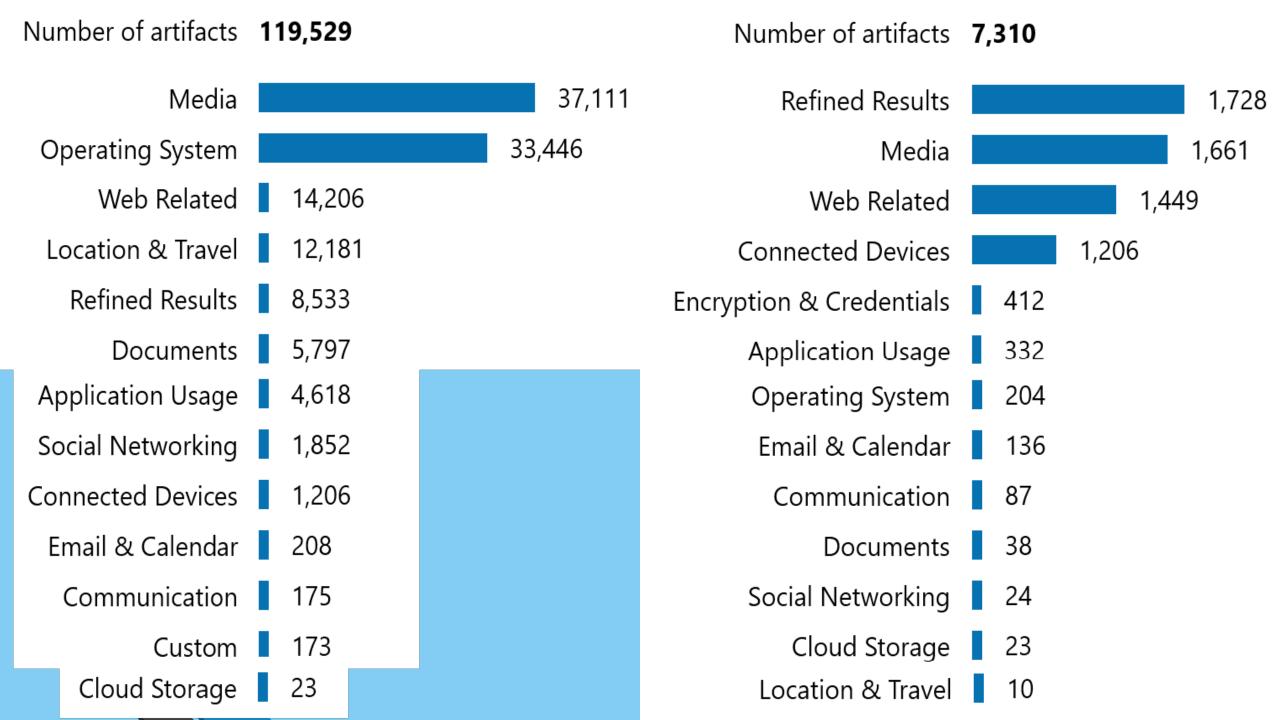
COMMUNICATION	87
Apple Contacts - iOS	4
GroupMe Accounts	1
■ iOS Call Logs	1
OS iMessage/SMS/MMS	6
OS Messages Preferences	1
iOS TextNow Chat	49
iOS TextNow Contacts	12
iOS TextNow Groups	5
iOS TextNow Profile	1
Viber Messages	7

OPERATING SYSTEM	33,447
.DS_Store Records	139
Apple Accounts	15
File System Information	2
iOS Home Screen Items	4
🐧 Network Interfaces - iOS, macOS	3
్లి Network Usage - Application Data	364
Owner Information	1
🄏 PowerLog App Usage	740
PowerLog Application State	9,470
PowerLog Battery Level	21,426
PowerLog Battery Shutdown	1
PowerLog Camera State	199
PowerLog Device Lock State	212
PowerLog In Call Service	398
PowerLog Lightning Cable Status	248
PowerLog Screen Autolock	14
PowerLog Timezone Information	204
👸 Private MAC Addresses - iOS	6
User Notification Events	1

OPERATING SYSTEM	206
.DS_Store Records	12
Apple Accounts	15
File System Information	2
" iOS Home Screen Items	4
్లిష్ఠీ Network Usage - Application Data	165
Owner Information	2
👸 Private MAC Addresses - iOS	6

^ APPLICATION USAGE	4,618
Application Install States	821
Application Permissions - MacOS, iOS	97
Biome Application Focus	20
Biome Application Install States	1
Biome Application Launch	40
Biome Device Orientation States	6
Biome Device Plugged-in States	63
Biome Device Screen Backlight States	64
Biome Keybag Lock States	13
Biome User Activity	1
Installed Applications	232
iOS App Cache	2,962
iOS Device Information	1
iOS User Word Dictionary	230
KnowledgeC Application Usage	10
KnowledgeC Device Lock States	13
KnowledgeC Notification Usage	1
KnowledgeC Screen Backlight States	40
Wallet Payment Cards	3

APPLICATION USAGE	333
Application Permissions - MacOS, iOS	99
	232
iOS Device Information	2

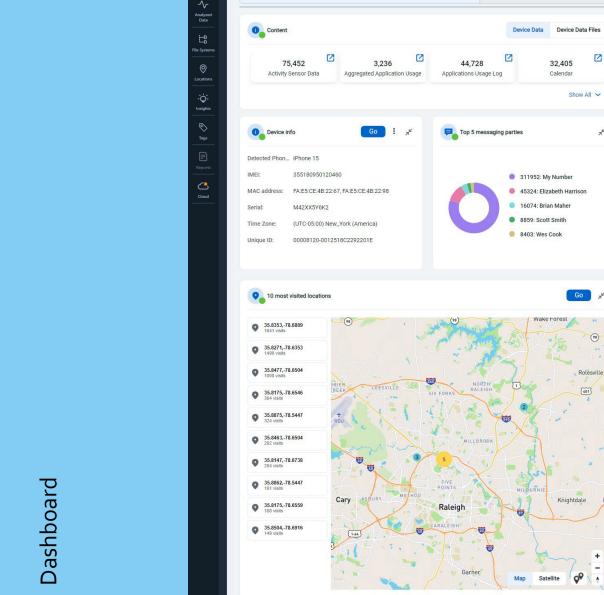


## Limitations of Full File System

- Passcode
- Operating System
- Lockdown Mode
- Time to install Cellebrite Agent
- Time to extract data
- Internet Connection
- Power Source

## What does the data look like?

- Dashboard
- Timeline
- Analyze Data
- File System
- Locations
- Insights
- Cloud Data



INS B PA File View Tools Cloud Plug-ins Report Help

Dashboard View
Data Details View

Model na...

Apple D...

Extractio...

FileSyst...

Extractio...

Path

4/22/20... F:\Ne...

Extraction Summary (1) ×

Extractio...

Evidence Pack

∃≟ Advance

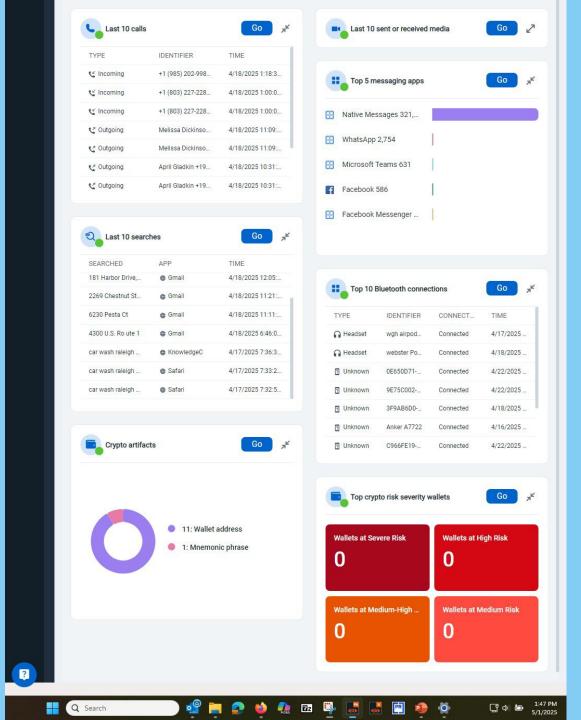
Image Hash

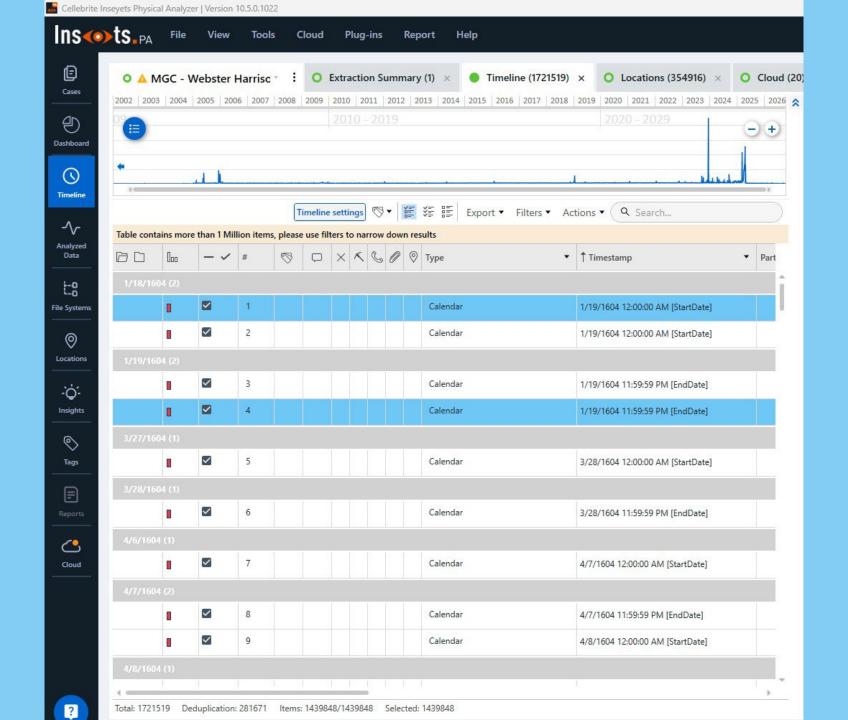
Hash data not available

Date Range Preliminary Device Report

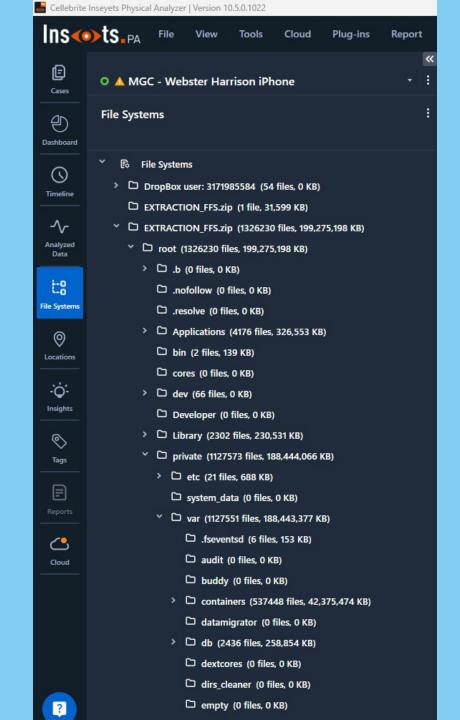
Learning Hub

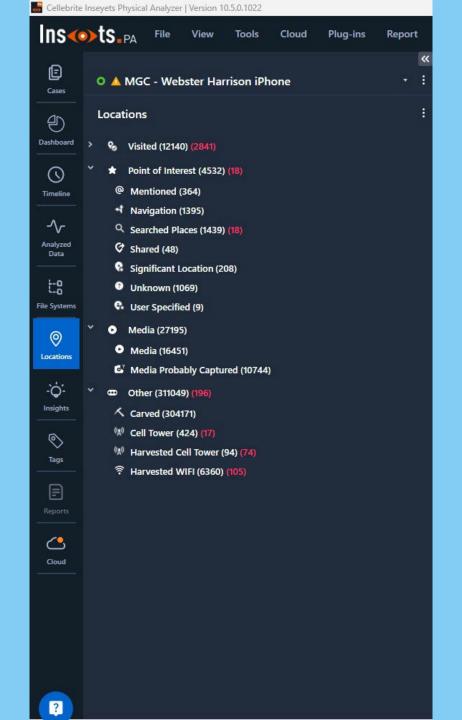
1 Evidence ^

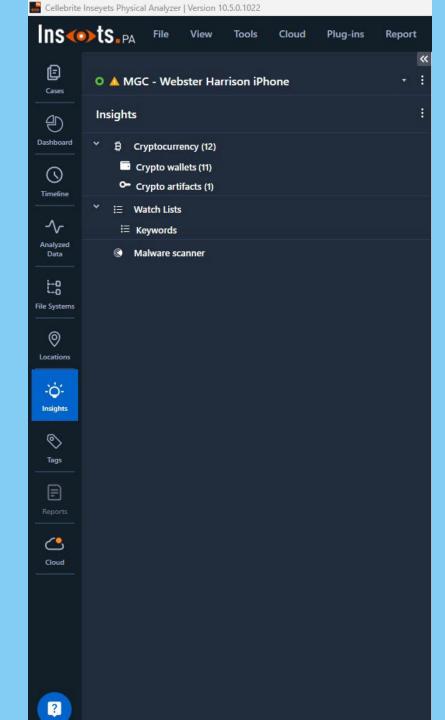


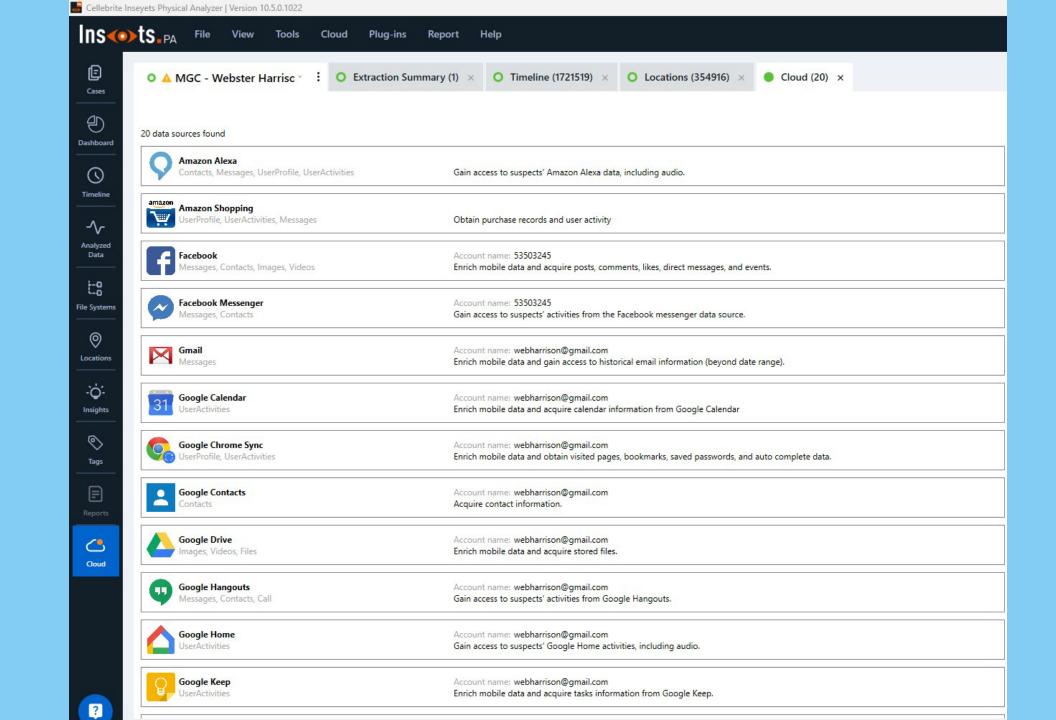


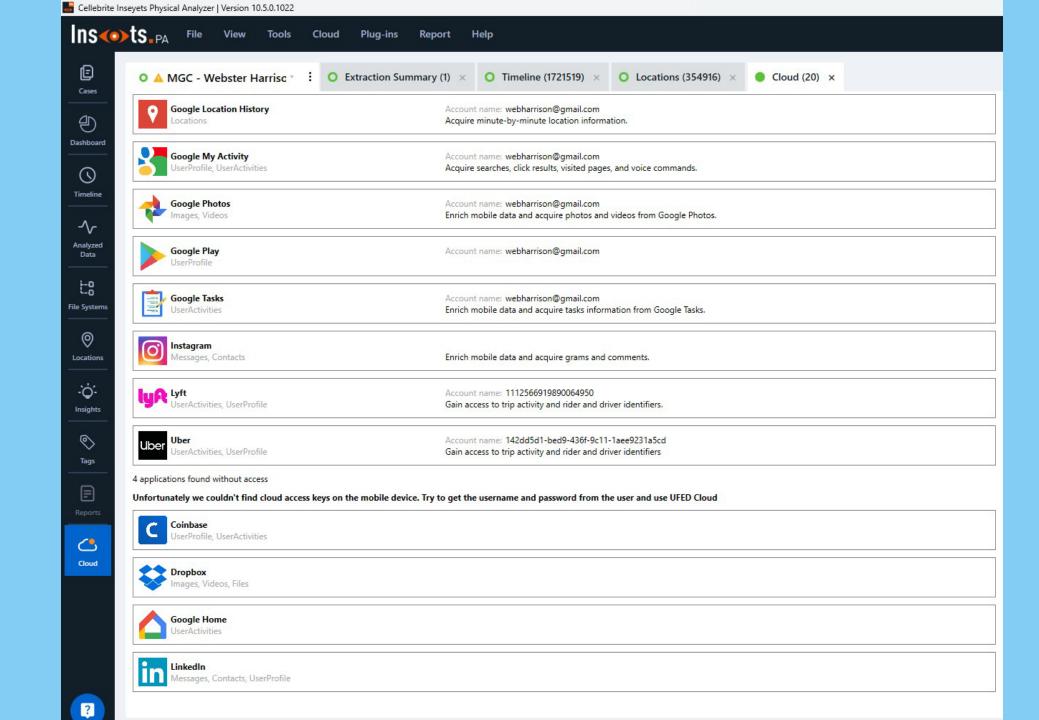












# Reporting

- Format type
- E-Discovery
- What to include

## Report Formats

Format

UFDR (For Cellebrite Reader, Path)

Case Information

Examiner name:

Location:

Case number:

Case name:

Evidence number:

Department:

Organization:

Investigator:

Crime type:

Notes:

UFDR (For Cellebrite Reader, Pathfinder or Guardian)

PDF Report

HTML Report

Excel Workbook (xlsx)

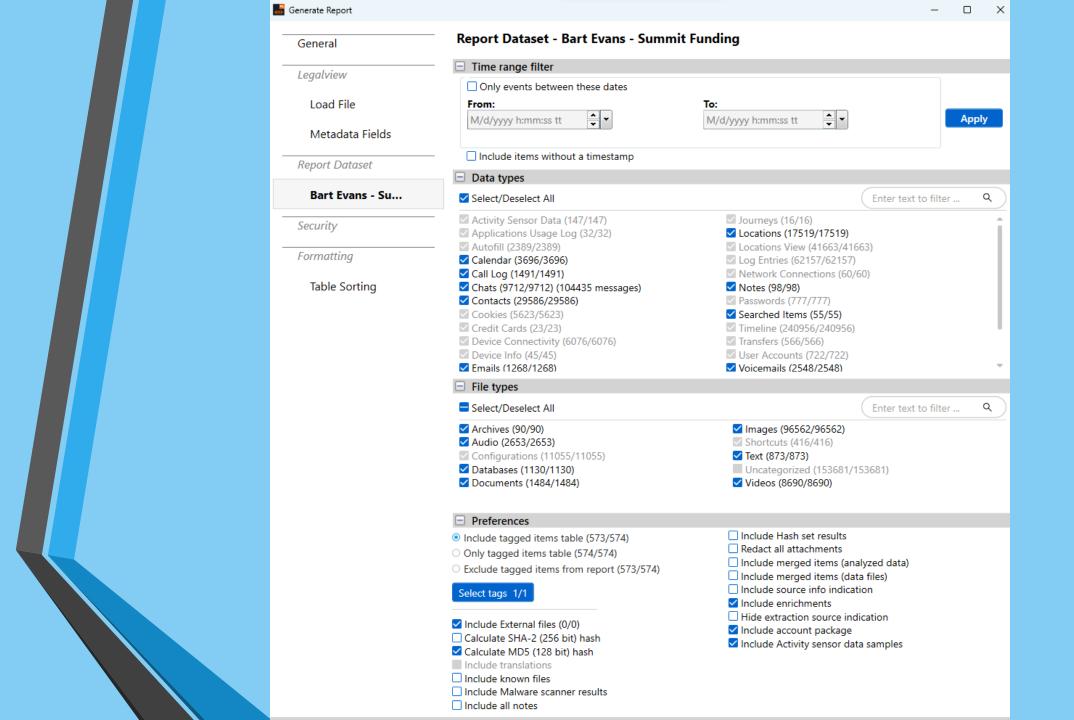
Word report

XML Report

Relativity Short Message Format

e-Discovery Load File

Close



## Cloud Storage



What data is stored in the cloud? AKA what can be collected?

### Public vs. Private Cloud Data

#### **Private**

- Verification needed
- Two-factor authentication
- Google Takeout, Data Downloads

#### **Public**

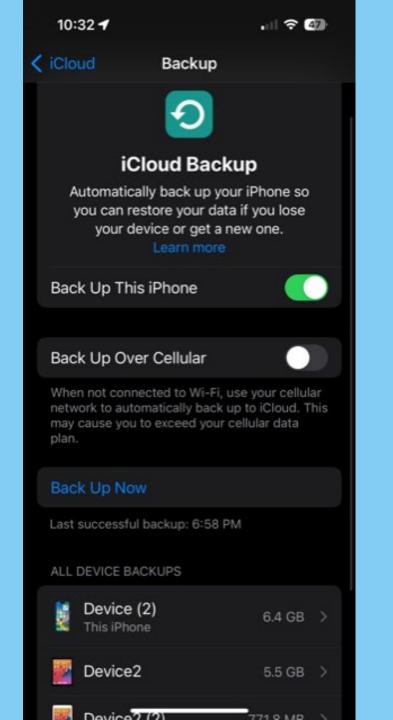
- YouTube
- Social Media
- Websites



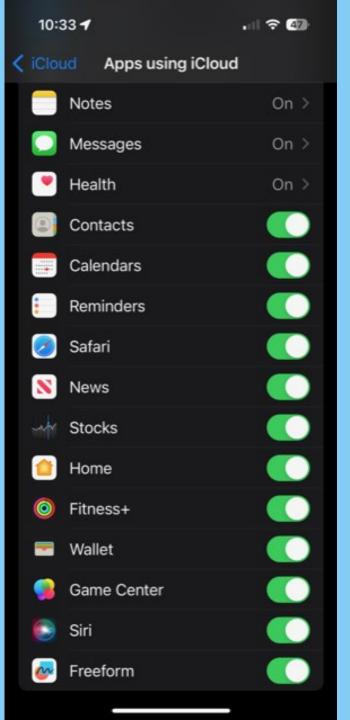


### Cloud-based USER Data

- Backups of phone data
  - Automatic setting in iCloud
  - Whole device backups
  - Data buckets
    - Photos
    - Videos
    - Apple Notes, etc.
- Most of the above is NOT stored encrypted by providers/would be available to law enforcement with a search warrant







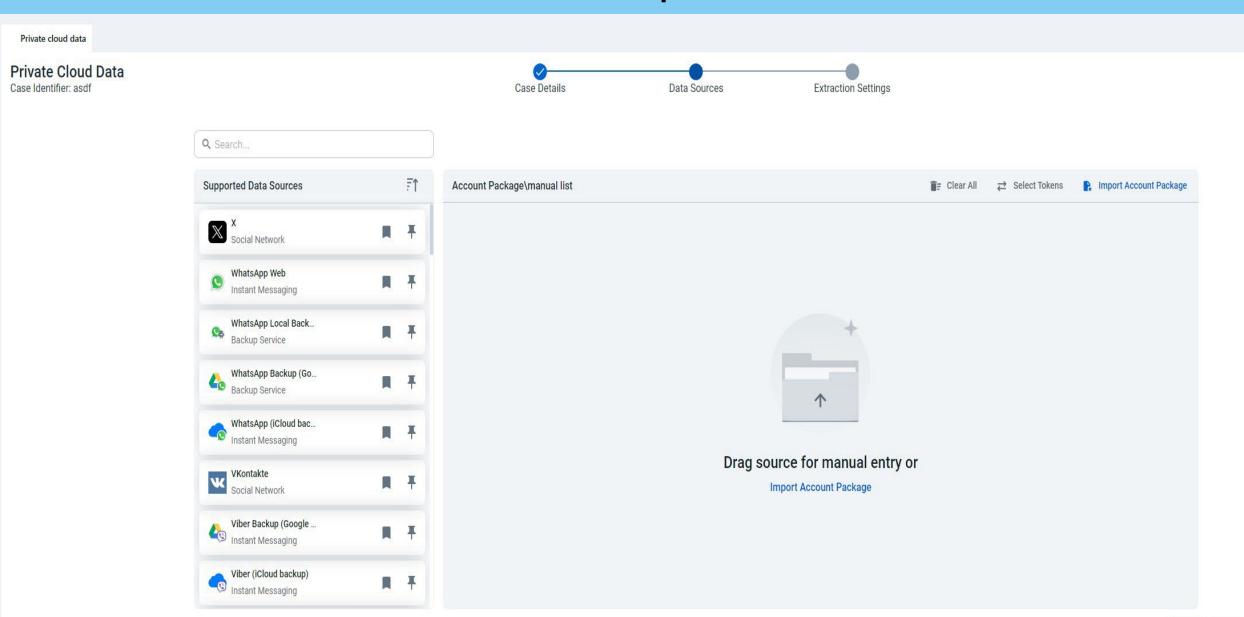
### Cloud-based USER Data

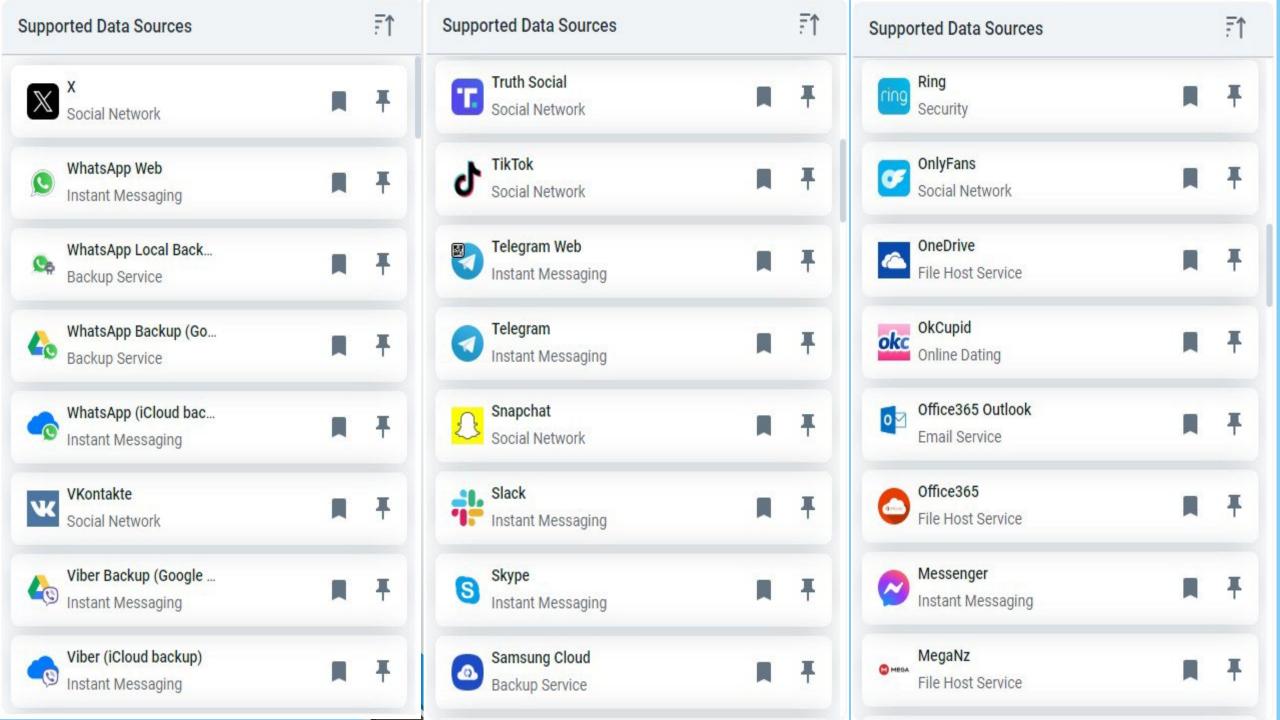
- "Content"
  - Documents, pictures, phone backups, texts, and so forth
- Most users can access this data themselves
  - Or can request the data from providers
  - Many cloud/social media allow "download your own data" option, e.g., Facebook, Google Takeout

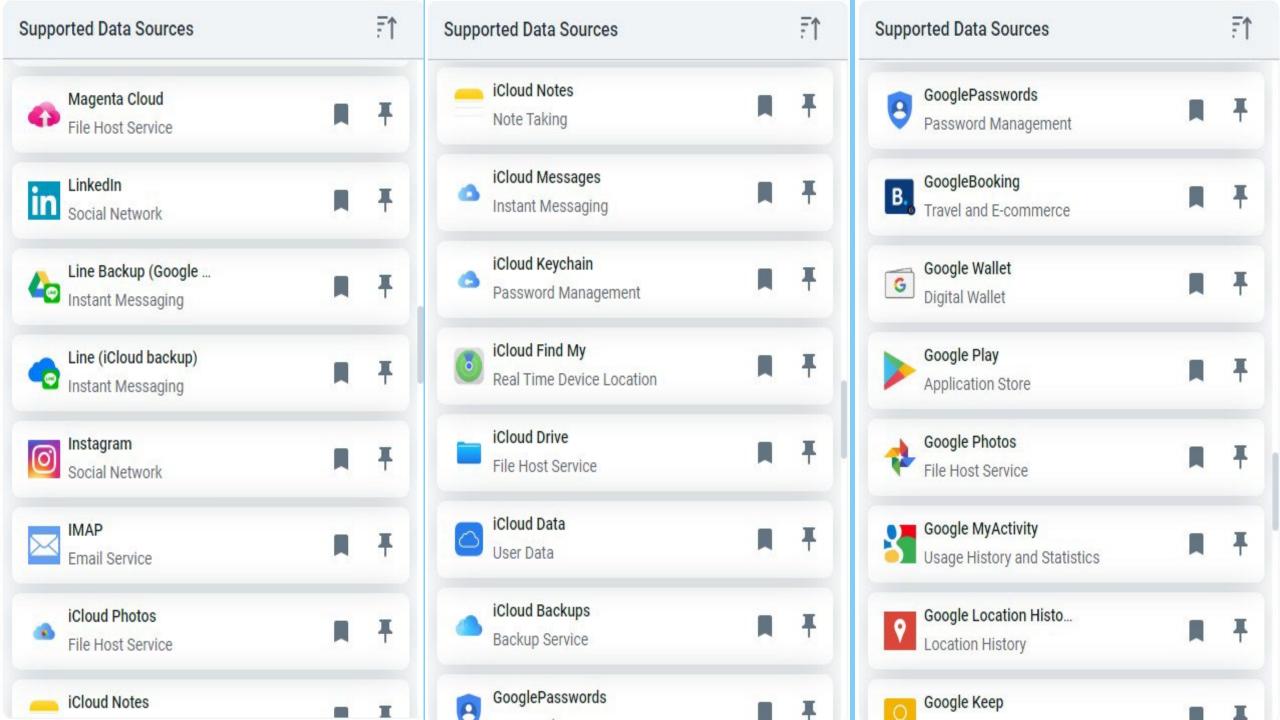
### Cloud-based administrative data

- Who logged in, from where what did they do? When did they do it?
- "outside the envelope" information, not as private as user content lowered protection under Stored Communications Act
- Can come from any cloud source
  - Social media
  - Streaming services
  - •loT
  - Router/network data

# Cloud Data Acquisition Cellebrite

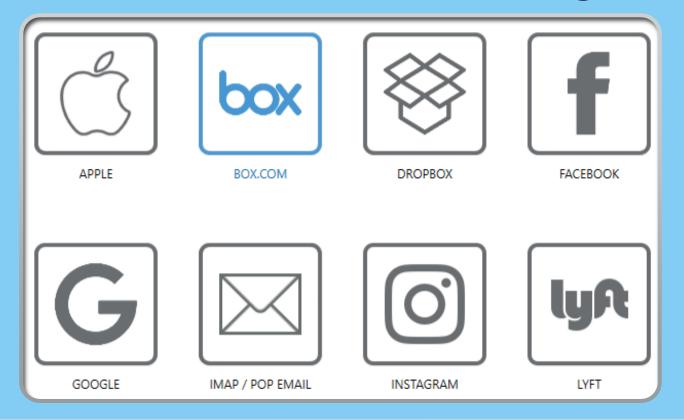


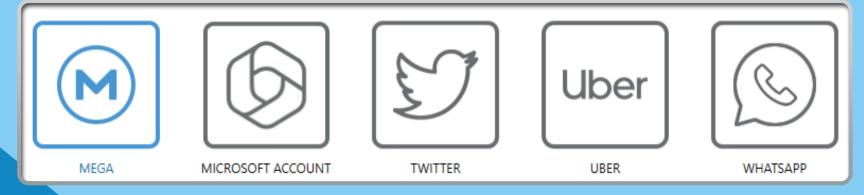




Supported Data Sources	₹↑	Supported Data Sources	<i>₹</i> ↑	Supported Data Sources		Ē↑
Google Keep Note Taking	p T	Gmail Email Service	p F	Social Network		1
Google Home Virtual Assistant	H T	Fitbit Physical Activity Tracker	H T	Discord Instant Messaging  Coinbase	, A	Ŧ
Google Drive File Host Service	p Ŧ	Facebook Social Network	H T	Cryptocurrency Wallet  Box		Ŧ
Google Contacts Contact Management	M ¥	Dropbox File Host Service	p T	File Host Service  Booking		<b>*</b>
Google Chrome Sync  Browser Data	M T	DJI Go 4 Social Network	H F	Booking Travel and E-commerce  Bluesky	÷.	I
Google Calendar Calendar	M ¥	Discord	n F	Social Network  Amazon Shopping Online Shopping		T
Google Backup Backup Service	M ¥	Instant Messaging  Coinbase	<b># #</b>	Online Shopping  Amazon Alexa		I
Gmail		Cryptocurrency Wallet		Virtual Assistant		Т

# Cloud Data Acquisition Magnet





#### Common Issues

- Phone carriers DON'T keep text message content for long
- SIM cards contain little to no actual data
- Where is data backed up
  - iCloud
  - iTunes backups (local backup)
  - Type of extraction from iCloud backup
- New Operating Systems

# Passcodes

- Forensic tools/services
- Physical methods often destructive



#### "MDM"

- Mobile Device Management
  - May control a single app/container on device
  - May control the entire phone
  - May allow employer to:
    - Remotely wipe the device
    - Remotely access the device
    - Monitory certain activity on the device related to an employee
  - May restrict employee's ability to copy/save data off the phone (iCloud/iTunes)
  - May also interfere with forensic process

## Factory Reset

- Factory resets of newer phones DELETE the encryption key
- Render data essentially unrecoverable
- Forensic exam only to perhaps bolster spoliation claim/motion for adverse inference
- Might obtain factory reset date



# Too many failed attempts



# Digital Forensic Workflow "Loop"

- Identify Assets
- Confirm Authority to Access
  - Consent of OP, Third-Party (Employer) Ownership?, Court Order, etc.
- Collect
- Process
- Analysis
  - Review Databases
- Report
- Discuss with Attorney and Client
- Feedback/Tasking to Examiner
- Repeat as Necessary

## Concerns About Spoliation?

- Merely touching an electronic device may change data
  - Last accessed dates for documents, last login dates, last "written" dates
  - Auto-delete functions may need to be changed, airplane mode enabled
  - Sometimes changing things is the only way, just be able to document/articulate every step

# What happens at the end of the case?

- Examiner may continue to hold a lot of sensitive/protected data
- Consider at settlement discussions/post- trial
  - Agreement among parties as to how to dispose?
  - Retention for a certain period depending on settlement, appeal, and so forth?
- (Please) don't make the expert hunt you down for case status and disposition

