

Forensic Advantage® Laboratory Information Management System

Solution Overview

Forensic laboratories rely heavily on lab-centric technologies to collect and analyze evidence. To keep pace with increasing volumes, it is important that these organizations leverage technology to enhance the productivity and accountability of their examiners and overall operations. Forensic Advantage is a full-featured Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) that offers the flexibility and reliability necessary to ensure the smooth operation of a forensic laboratory.

Forensic Advantage was designed to address the unique case and evidence management requirements of local, state and federal forensic laboratories, law enforcement agencies and medical examiners. The product ensures accountability for evidence chain of custody, collects and associates scientific analysis for evidence submitted, provides query and statistical reporting, facilitates inter-lab connectivity and generates documentation for use in criminal proceedings. The product can also be configured to automate communication regarding the transfer of evidence, case status and results. In order to maximize its value, flexibility and scalability, Forensic Advantage was designed as a “Customizable-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) product built with COTS components”. The solution benefits from a modular, object-oriented architecture that can be configured to address various business processes and requirements. Most customer-requested customizations are addressed by changing underlying templates and/or business rules as opposed to application code.

Business Advantages

Forensic Advantage is a full-featured laboratory information management system that provides system access and functionality in a modular fashion. Key system modules include:

- Evidence

Evidence tracks property from collection through disposition. Leveraging barcodes and password protected access, the system ensures a true chain-of-custody by requiring legitimate two-sided transfers. Hierarchical evidence is supported, including derivative items, sub-items, containers, batches and lockbox transfers.

- Case Processing

Case Processing provides tools for managing caseloads at varying levels. Supervisors have the ability to assign and review examiner caseloads while examiners are provided with tools that automate the collection of exam results and the production of case-related documentation. Configurable backlog reports facilitate informed decisions regarding staffing as well as budget considerations.

- Resource Inventory

One or more Inventory modules may be configured to manage the location, status and disposition of items such as lab instruments, firearms, reference materials, safety equipment, chemical reagents, exam kits and personnel.

- Testimony

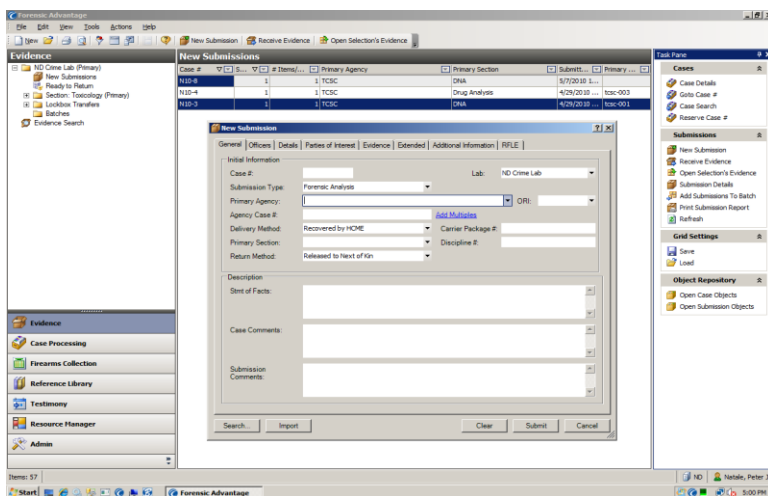
Testimony tracks subpoenas for expert testimony, leveraging Outlook to ensure that requested appearances are added to an examiners' schedule. The appearance, time, travel and expense information is collected to facilitate detailed reporting.

- Workbench Management

Workbench, combined with one or more Inventory modules, ensures that examiner activities, lab instrumentation and chemical reagents meet or exceed the laboratory's current Standard Operating Procedures.

- PreLog Web and PreLog Win

These modules can be configured to speed the submission of evidence and distribution of reports via the Internet or Windows. Users can submit evidence forms before their arrival and agencies may view the status of their requests and download copies of their reports when available.



Technical Advantages

A core component of the Forensic Advantage solution is Microsoft Office System. Leveraging the business productivity suite provides a level of process automation that is not only user-friendly but grows with future iterations of the Office platform as well. Independent Office applications are leveraged as follows:

- **Microsoft Word**
Automates the production of documentation and deliverables, incorporating XML data from exams/investigations and effectively capturing free-form notes and dialogue.
- **Microsoft InfoPath**
Provides intelligent forms technology for automating examiner and investigator worksheets, resulting in XML datasets that can be leveraged in multiple instances.
- **Microsoft Visio**
Allows examiners/investigators to document crime scene and spatial situations.
Microsoft Outlook
Enables examiners/investigators to leverage calendar, task lists and e-mail for scheduling and communication, particularly as it relates to testimony activities.
- **Microsoft PowerPoint**
Templates can be deployed to facilitate automated construction of case summaries for use during testimony.
- **Microsoft Excel**
Provides data analysis capabilities that can be leveraged independently or as part of a larger reporting process.
- **Microsoft OneNote**
Facilitates the capture and conversion of hand-written notes.
- **Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services**
Provides web-based workgroup and departmental collaboration, including an online repository for Standard Operating Procedures with the Quality Advantage optional module.

The data warehousing component of Forensic Advantage leverages Microsoft SQL Server for departmental and enterprise data collection. In addition to providing a foundation for secure and auditable data transactions, SQL Server provides an economical and scalable platform for desktop, workgroup, departmental and agency-wide data management and reporting. SQL Server's adherence to, and support of, industry standards also promotes bilateral communication with disparate systems, facilitating the efficient migration of data from legacy applications.

- **System Administration**
System Administration provides numerous tools to facilitate the timely and effective system maintenance and administration. Role-based security, management reporting, database auditing and exception processes are all handled within this module.

About Forensic Advantage[®] Systems

Forensic Advantage[®] Systems provides business solutions grounded in proven technology. As an award-winning, Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, the organization is among the elite group of Microsoft's business partners, earning their highest endorsement. Forensic Advantage Systems has the knowledge, skills and commitment to help its customers implement a solution that matches their exact needs. The Forensic Advantage platform ensures accountability for evidence chain of custody, collects and associates scientific analysis for evidence submitted, provides query and statistical reporting, facilitates inter-lab connectivity and generates documentation for use in criminal proceedings. It can also be configured to automate communication regarding the transfer of evidence, case status and results to maximize its value, flexibility and scalability.

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