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Excerpt from the remarks of Congressman Spencer Bachus at the announcement for the National Computer Forensics Institute in Hoover on March 9. □ Nearly one thousand law enforcement officials from across the country will receive technology training at the Hoover Public Safety Center to help them use electronic data to solve crimes, including cybercrime.

This National Computer Forensics Institute is truly the culmination of an unprecedented coordinated effort among federal, state, and local governments. Governor Riley, Mayor Petelos, Secretary Chertoff, Deputy Director Brian Nagel of the Secret Service – thank you. How ever, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge first and foremost the efforts of the Alabama District Attorneys Association.

Thank you, Randy Hillman and all our fine District Attorneys...

Let me give you some insights on why I am so excited about this Institute.

Computer forensics is the process of extracting, analyzing, and preserving data. It is a virtual gold mine of very vast, precise, and most importantly in the trial setting, reliable and valuable information and evidence. It is not a human being on the witness stand with evidence that is imprecise, contradictory, and subject to memory loss, prejudice, and motive.

Two witnesses testify about the same conversation.

Each tells a different story.

Each tells you what they think is true.

Several witnesses testify and still the picture is unclear and gaps exist.

When was the conversation?

No one quite remembers although it may be critical.

Forensic evidence is altogether different. Think about what's on your computer at home.

accurate.

the most factual information available on what, when, and to whom something was said.

It's all

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Not only emails and instant messages, but your personal and financial records, letters and memos, websites you visit, it's all there.

It's like reading your mind in real time, who you associate with, what you're up to, what you were thinking.

It can be highly revealing and if you are engaged in criminal conduct, highly incriminating.

Every day law enforcement receives this data. By the truckload and by the proverbial boatload. Information from 100 hard drives can fill the Library of Congress.

The number of devices from which information can be extracted is mushrooming: blackberries, Ipods, X-boxes, GPS devices, and newer versions of cell phones as well as the traditional personal computer.

But there's a bottleneck between all this valuable data and the courtroom when it comes to using it to put child molesters, crooks, and even terrorists behind bars. The workload is growing faster than the workforce. What we don't have is trained, qualified professionals to first find the data on all these devices, and then read the data, thus the need for the Institute.

