

# Journal of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners

## Volume 3, Number 1

### ABSTRACTS

1. The Heterogeneity of Handwriting  
Roy A. Huber

The practice of handwriting identification has been criticized by the judiciary of late for not providing the empirical data in support of its claims for the uniqueness of writing and the significance of its discriminating elements. This investigation is an endeavor to satisfy the requirement by describing a study of a collection of nearly 1000 writers executing similar writing standards in which many of the normal variables have been controlled. With the exception of two writers who were professional penmen, no difficulties were encountered in discriminating between writers. Owing to the range of natural variation in some individuals, however, it is possible that there may be a few specimens in the collection having common authorship that have not been appropriately associated by the limited selection of discriminating elements employed in the study. Suffice it to say, this kind of error does not lead to inaccuracies in writer identification. The frequency of occurrence reported of the discriminating elements selected provides some indication of their relative significance.

2.  
Gerhard W. Wendt, M.S.

In an effort to expand on the knowledge of signature disguises most commonly used by writers, 128 state police cadets were given a survey instrument and asked to provide signature exemplars. These cadets were then instructed to disguise their normal signatures. A comprehensive index of seventeen different disguise methods was utilized to analyze what techniques of deception had been employed by each writer. While previous research regarding the relationship between education and disguise was directed towards extended handwriting, this study focused on the effects of education on disguise in signatures. From the data collected, most subjects used between one and three methods of disguise with the most popular method being "*altered capital letters*" in disguising their name. A weak relationship was noted between education and the writer's ability to successfully disguise his/her signature. Additional findings are discussed in the study. The information from this study should prove useful for forensic documents examiners encountering the phenomenon of disguise in a questioned signature.

3. Identifiability of the Flatbed Scanners and Its Products (Graphic Files and Printed Results)  
Richard A. Horton, BS, M.Ed.

This study addresses the ability to identify the specific original document, scanner or graphics file from which a scanned product (graphics file or printed result) was made. Contaminants in many types of paper are often reproduced by the scanner, allowing a correlation of the product to an original document. Further, Small Computer Systems Interface (SCSI) chain noise (interference) frequently produces a non-repeating series of marks allowing a graphics file to be correlated to a printed result. Photocopier-type defects from the scanner platen and internal components may also allow the correlation of a specific scanner to a printed result.

4. Retail Price Marking Devices: Breakaway Slits and Type Fonts  
Joyce A. Lauterbach

There are currently four major manufacturers and/or distributors of hand-held pricing guns and labels. A fifth manufacturer makes a generic pricing gun and label that may be marketed under the name of several distributors.

Class characteristics of labels manufactured by each company depends primarily on recognition of the design of tamper-proof or break away slits, and recognition of the standard font style for numbering.

5.       A Study of Hmong Handwriting  
          Janis S. Tweedy

The handwriting of Hmong people who learned to write in Southeast Asia was collected and studied to see if there were any class characteristics or unusual habits present in the writing that could identify it as having been produced by a Hmong writer. Of interest is the fact that the Hmong people had no written language before 1953 when one was developed for them that uses the Roman alphabet. No identifiable class characteristics or habits were identified. However, a large percentage of the writers used more hand printing or penlifts than normally encountered by the author.