# Silo for Research helps a U.S. Law Enforcement Agency Conduct Secure Undercover Operations

A law enforcement agency in the Southeastern United States is a multifaceted organization providing investigative and forensic science support for the state's entire criminal justice system. The agency has a network of undercover operatives, whose responsibilities requires visiting suspicious websites and communicating online with individuals suspected of heinous crimes, including human trafficking and crimes against children.

In the agency's headquarters, investigators use an isolated computer network for online research, allowing them to venture into the dark corners of the web without risking exposure. But such networks can be costly to maintain, don't guarantee complete anonymity, and can't be extended to the agency's regional offices and field operations.

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The agency chose the Silo for Research platform, and it has quickly become one of their most essential tools – both for undercover Cyber Team investigators and in the Digital Forensics department. It provides investigators and examiners with a secure browsing experience – they can safely communicate with suspects and visit sketchy sites without having to worry about their IP addresses being flagged, or their local machines getting infected. Silo for Research provides additional critical functionality, allowing investigators the ability to misattribute their location to appear as if they are connecting from anywhere in the world.

The Cyber Team leadership has mandated that any team member investigating internet crimes against children (ICAC) and cybercrimes uses Silo for all their browsing activity. "Silo also provides definite advantages for the Digital Forensics team," says the Supervisor. "If my examiners come across an unknown site, they can securely inspect it using Silo for Research, without worrying about infecting their local machine or the agency's network."

The Digital Forensics examiners also use Silo for Research to see how the same website appears on different devices – without leaving their browsing environment. "They can see what the site looks like on an Android phone vs. a Safari browser on a MacOS, or on Firefox or Chrome on Windows," explains says the Digital Forensics Unit Supervisor. "I find this to be very beneficial if you need to take screenshots to present to a prosecutor. You can format the evidence to look exactly how it would likely appear on the suspect's device."

Silo's ease of use and scalability have allowed the agency to expand its use to their field agents. The agency uses the Silo for Research platform for digital forensics, ICAC investigations, cybercrime investigations, fusion center analysts, and human trafficking operations. The Digital Forensics Unit Supervisor concludes that Silo's capabilities have become indispensable to the agency's operations: "Silo for Research is one of our most vital tools."

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