

X-RATED FILES SURFACE: Porn-visit data, classified crime memos now public

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EWING - Pornography and dozens of internal memos, some dealing with police murder and rape investigations, ended up in the public's hands after Ewing Township sold the computers at a public auction for just \$16 three years ago.

Police thought they had deleted the data in the computer hard drives, but a simple search provided at least 88 documents of private police information, sources said. Temporary Internet files also appeared, revealing visits to several pornographic Web sites.

The data was recovered by Steve Sredinski, using simple software he downloaded for free online. In fact, anyone with a computer can acquire the software, OnTrack Data Recovery, using a basic file sharing program.

"We more or less want to make an example," Sredinski said. "This is sloppy work. These are supervisors getting paid \$100 to \$120,000 a year. They should know better."

Sredinski said he and others got the idea to search the computers after one of the eight purchased revealed information that had never been deleted. He was able to recover data from three of the other machines.

Some of the files recovered included:

- Countless files profiling Internet porn visists
- A sworn affidavit from Det. Pat Holt in the investigation of the 2001 murder of Robert L. Priester. The document details the investigation of the case, including information that would eventually lead to a 30-year murder sentence for Jerome "Righteous" Roberts. The document, provided to The Trentonian, included personal information for both the suspect and victim, including home addresses, social security numbers, and vehicle VIN numbers.
- A 1997 sexual assault investigation of a 13-year-old Ewing boy, who allegedly assaulted a female.
- A 1998 document including the admittance of several robberies in Ewing.
- An excel spreadsheet detailing the make, model, and license plate numbers of missing vehicles in the area.
- A 2000 inter-office memo detailing in great detail how police would deter crime along Clover Avenue down to exact locations.
- A 2003 internal investigation in which an officer allegedly called named suspect a "faggot" during a routine traffic stop.
- A 2002 inter-office medical report from an officer who sprained his hand while slipping on a rooftop.

Over the past three to four months, Sredinski and his partner searched these files. This past weekend, they began to compile what they found on a Web site entitled CitizensCommitteeForEwing.com.

"Probably, when this is all said and done, I'll have 50 to 60 pages on the Web site," he said.

News of the Web site has spread rapidly since the information was posted. Ewing Mayor Jack Ball said he didn't find out about the Web site until Monday.

"The most important thing is that the police department verify that information is out

there that should not be out there," Ball said. "My main concern is to protect the privacy of the people."

Police Capt. Frank Sabatino, who is filling in while Chief Robert Coultan is on vacation, said that they, too, are aware of the situation, and currently are investigating it.

By yesterday afternoon, Sredinski said that he and his partner had been contacted by the Township in regards to the site. He said that they are willing to comply with any pages that may need to be taken down.

"(There is a) fine line there," Ball said of the documents. "It's a matter of investigation, a matter of the police department to determine whether there is any confidential information about personnel, medical records, that are certainly private."

While the data mishap didn't occur during Ball's watch, the mayor is sensitive to the privacy issues involved now that the documents are public.

"It's a shame and it's a sad thing that it happened," he said. "I will do everything in my power to make sure it never, ever happens on my watch."

Sredinski said that his only intention was to give the people of Ewing an idea of what goes on inside their police department.

"The police department is crying about the overtime money they need," he said. "But the police department has a lot of time to do all of (these things) online."

Sredinski's partner, who's name is being withheld by The Trentonian, offered similar sentiments.

"I pay over 8,000 a year in taxes," he said. "When you're paying that kind of taxes and then you see someone scheduling football games, you start asking questions."

"It was nothing derogatory toward (the police department)," Sredinski added, "It was just to prove a point."