SAMPLE DIGITAL FORENSIC REPORT

Was confidential data put into an AI assistant?

SCENARIO	**Use of AI assistant apps with client material on a company MacBook**
INSTRUCTED BY	**A scientific consultancy (anonymised)**
DEVICE	**Apple MacBook Pro, Apple silicon, 512 GB, FileVault enabled**
PERIOD EXAMINED	**3 August to 18 September 2026**
METHOD	**Forensic logical image of the data volume, analysed with our Mac forensic system**

Sample report: anonymised, details changed. This is an example of our reporting, based on real casework. Names, dates, file names and identifying details have been changed. It is not a live case file.

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01 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Two AI assistants were used on the MacBook during the period: a desktop app installed in April 2026, and a second assistant reached through the Safari browser. The records show when and for how long they were used and which client files were open alongside them. They do not hold the text that was typed in or the files that were attached. Times are UK time (BST).

- **Amount of use.** In the 20 working days for which the Mac's app-usage record survives, the desktop assistant was the front app for 31 hours 40 minutes in total, an average of about 1 hour 35 minutes a day. The busiest day was 9 September, at 4 hours 12 minutes.
- **Client files alongside.** On 11 of those 20 days, documents from two client project folders were opened within five minutes of a period of assistant use. They included a draft study report, a results workbook and a client contract.
- **Files passed to the app.** The assistant's working folder on the Mac holds 46 files that the app was given or produced in agent sessions, among them copies of three client documents.
- **A personal account.** The desktop app was signed in to an account under a personal email address, not the company's. The company therefore has no administrator access to its history.
- **Outputs kept.** A folder named `AI drafts` in the consultant's Documents holds 63 files, including draft report sections for both clients.
- **No concealment.** The app was not removed, its data folder is intact, and no history was cleared.

The records support the conclusion that client material was provided to the desktop assistant on at least three occasions (confidence: high) and are consistent with wider use of client content in prompts (confidence: medium). What was actually submitted is held in the assistant provider's account history, not on the laptop.

02 INSTRUCTIONS AND SCOPE

The client is a scientific consultancy whose contracts forbid passing client data to third-party services without consent. A client noticed that a draft report read as if machine-written. The consultant concerned had resigned and was working a notice period. The client asked five questions.

NO.	QUESTION	SHORT ANSWER
1	Which AI tools were used on the laptop, and since when?	A desktop assistant since 14 April 2026, and a browser-based assistant
2	How much were they used?	About 1 hour 35 minutes a day on average for the desktop app
3	Was client material put into them?	Three client documents are in the app's working folder. Wider use is likely
4	Was the history exported or deleted?	No sign of either
5	Can the conversations be recovered?	Not from the laptop. They are held in the account

03 HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

Every finding in this report is labelled so that a reader can see at once how much weight it carries.

LABEL	MEANING
Observed fact	Something recorded on the laptop itself. The source record is named, and another examiner working from the same image would find the same thing.
Inference	What the examiner concludes from one or more observed facts. Each inference carries a confidence level.
Unresolved	A question the laptop cannot answer. Where another source could answer it, that source is named.

Confidence levels are used as follows. **High**: several independent records agree and no reasonable alternative fits them. **Medium**: the records support the conclusion, but an alternative explanation remains open. **Low**: the records are consistent with the conclusion and no more. Findings describe actions recorded under a user account. They do not, by themselves, identify the person at the keyboard or the reason for an action.

04 EVIDENCE AND METHOD

Exhibit. One Apple MacBook Pro with Apple silicon and a 512 GB internal drive, FileVault enabled. It was collected from the consultant on 18 September 2026, switched off by the client's IT lead, and delivered to us on 21 September with the login password.

Imaging. Apple silicon storage is encrypted by hardware and cannot be removed for copying. A forensic logical image of the data volume was taken on 21 September with the Mac running and unlocked, hashed with SHA-256 on completion, and all analysis was carried out on a working copy. Because the laptop was imaged three days after collection, the Mac's short-lived usage records were still present.

Analysis. The working copy was analysed with our Mac forensic system. The app-usage records were read with a second, independent parser and the two results compared.

Sources used.

- App-usage records, which log which app was in front and for how long, to the second.
- File system event logs (FSEvents) for the creation and removal of files.
- Recent-document lists for Word, Excel, Preview and Finder.
- The desktop assistant's own data folder: settings, logs, session folders and cached data.
- Safari history and download records.
- The Mac's install history and privacy-permission database.

Times. Converted from UTC to UK time, BST (UTC+1).

05 LAWFUL BASIS AND PROPORTIONALITY

The laptop is the client's property and was examined on the client's written instruction for the specific questions listed above. The examination was limited to the stated period and to material relevant to those questions. Personal content found on the laptop was not read beyond what was needed to classify it, and is reported by category and count, not reproduced. The client was advised to record its lawful basis for the examination and to keep this report confidential to those who need it, in line with the Information Commissioner's guidance on monitoring workers. The individual concerned may be entitled to request a copy of personal data held about them, including in this report.

06 LIMITATIONS

- **Conversation content is not on the laptop.** The assistants store conversations in the user's online account. The Mac holds settings, logs and working files, and sometimes cached fragments. It does not hold a readable history of prompts and replies.
- **Pasted text leaves no record.** Text copied from a document and pasted into a prompt is not logged anywhere on the Mac. The report can show that a document was open at the same time as the assistant, and no more.
- **Usage records cover four weeks.** macOS keeps its app-usage record for about four weeks. It survives here from 24 August to 18 September. Earlier use is shown only by installation and file dates.
- **Browser assistant: titles only.** For the assistant used in Safari, history gives the page titles and times of conversations. Titles are short summaries that the service generates.
- **Personal account.** Because the app was signed in to a personal account, the company cannot export its history. Access would require the consultant's cooperation or a court order.
- **A person is not identified.** The records show activity under one user account.

07 THE AI TOOLS ON THE LAPTOP

TOOL	FIRST SEEN	ACCOUNT	HOW USED
Desktop assistant app	Installed 14 April 2026; updated itself regularly	Personal email address, paid individual plan	Chat, file attachments and agent sessions with access to chosen folders
Browser-based assistant	First visit in surviving history 6 July 2026	Not recorded	38 conversation pages visited, mostly short
Company-approved assistant	Licensed to the consultant since January 2026	Company account	Opened on four days in the period

OBSERVED FACT

The privacy-permission database shows that on 2 June 2026 the desktop assistant was granted access to the Documents and Desktop folders. From that date it could read files in those folders when asked to in an agent session.

OBSERVED FACT

The app's settings file names the signed-in account. The address is at a consumer mail service and contains the consultant's name. It is recorded on the case file and not reproduced here.

INFERENCE

The consultant chose a personal, unapproved assistant in preference to the approved one for most AI use. Confidence: high.

08 HOW MUCH THE DESKTOP ASSISTANT WAS USED

The table shows the ten busiest days of the 20 working days in the surviving record.

DATE	TIME IN FRONT	LONGEST SINGLE SPELL	CLIENT FILES OPENED WITHIN FIVE MINUTES
25 Aug	1 h 48 min	34 min	`[Client A] Study report draft v3.docx`
27 Aug	2 h 05 min	41 min	`[Client A] Results tables.xlsx`
1 Sept	2 h 31 min	52 min	`[Client A] Study report draft v4.docx`
3 Sept	1 h 57 min	29 min	None
7 Sept	3 h 16 min	1 h 04 min	`[Client B] Proposal.docx`; `[Client B] Master services agreement.pdf`
8 Sept	2 h 44 min	47 min	`[Client B] Proposal.docx`
9 Sept	4 h 12 min	1 h 22 min	`[Client A] Study report draft v5.docx`; `[Client A] Results tables.xlsx`
11 Sept	2 h 09 min	38 min	`[Client A] Study report FINAL.docx`
15 Sept	1 h 50 min	33 min	`CV 2026.docx`; `Cover letter.docx`
17 Sept	2 h 22 min	45 min	`[Client B] Proposal v2.docx`

OBSERVED FACT

Across the 20 days the app was in front for 31 hours 40 minutes. Word was in front for 38 hours and Excel for 11 hours over the same days.

OBSERVED FACT

On 9 September the user switched between the assistant and Word 94 times between 13:10 and 17:30. The Word document open was the Client A study report draft.

INFERENCE

The assistant was used as a working tool in the drafting of the Client A report and the Client B proposal, and not occasionally or for unrelated tasks. Confidence: high. Switching between apps does not prove that text was copied from one to the other, although rapid alternation of this kind is typical of it.

09 CLIENT MATERIAL PASSED TO THE ASSISTANT

The desktop app keeps a working folder for each agent session. Files a user attaches, and files the app produces, are stored there.

SESSION DATE	FILES IN THE SESSION FOLDER	OF NOTE
27 Aug	4	A copy of `[Client A] Results tables.xlsx`; three charts produced by the app
7 Sept	9	Copies of `[Client B] Master services agreement.pdf` and `[Client B] Proposal.docx`; a summary and a redrafted proposal produced by the app
9 Sept	12	Six report sections produced by the app as Word files
Other sessions (11)	21	No client-named files. Spreadsheets of public data, a CV, two covering letters

OBSERVED FACT

The three client documents in the session folders are byte-for-byte identical to the originals in the company's project folders. Their hashes match.

OBSERVED FACT

The results workbook contains measurement data for 212 samples. The client has confirmed that this is unpublished data belonging to Client A and that it does not contain personal information about individuals.

INFERENCE

On 27 August and 7 September, three confidential client documents were given to the assistant. Once attached to a session, a file's content is sent to the provider for processing. Confidence: high.

UNRESOLVED

What the assistant was asked to do with the documents, and whether further client text was pasted into ordinary chats. This is recorded in the account's conversation history.

10 THE BROWSER-BASED ASSISTANT

DATE	CONVERSATION PAGE TITLES (EXAMPLES)	SOURCE
6 July to 20 Aug	"Rewrite paragraph more formally"; "Excel formula for rolling mean"; "Summarise regulatory guidance"	Safari history
2 Sept	"Statistical method wording for report"	Safari history
14 Sept	"Notice period and restrictive covenant question"	Safari history

OBSERVED FACT

Thirty-eight conversation pages were visited across 19 days. The median visit lasted under four minutes. No file was downloaded from the service.

INFERENCE

The browser-based assistant was used for short, general queries. Nothing in the titles identifies a client. Confidence: medium, because a title is only a summary of a conversation.

11 EXPORTS, DELETIONS AND OUTPUTS

- **No export.** The assistant can produce a data-export archive on request. No such archive was downloaded, and no export email was opened on the laptop.
- **No deletion.** The app's data folder is intact and its logs run continuously from installation to 18 September. Safari history was not cleared.
- **Outputs kept.** `Documents/AI drafts` was created on 22 April and holds 63 files. Twenty-four have client names in their file names. The latest was saved on 17 September.
- **Outputs used.** Four paragraphs of the Client A final report, as sent to the client, match text in a file produced by the app on 9 September. The comparison is set out in a separate schedule supplied to the client.

OBSERVED FACT

None of the `AI drafts` files was copied to removable storage or a personal cloud service. No USB storage device was connected in the period.

12 ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS CONSIDERED

- **Only public or anonymised material was used.** That is true of 11 of the 14 agent sessions. It is not true of the three client documents found in the other three.
- **The files were placed in the session folders by some other process.** The folders are created and written only by the app, and the files' creation times fall inside periods when the app was in front.
- **The consultant believed the tool was approved.** The company's approved assistant was installed and licensed on the same laptop. The consultant's state of mind is not something the laptop can show, and it is a matter for the client's own enquiry.
- **The provider does not retain the data.** Retention and training terms depend on the plan and settings of the personal account. They are not recorded on the laptop.

13 CONCLUSIONS

QUESTION	FINDING	CONFIDENCE
Which AI tools were used?	A personal desktop assistant, a browser assistant, and briefly the approved tool	HIGH
How much?	31 h 40 min over 20 working days for the desktop app	HIGH
Was client material provided to them?	Three client documents were attached to agent sessions	HIGH
Was other client text pasted into prompts?	Likely, given the pattern of use on drafting days	MEDIUM
Was history exported or deleted?	No evidence of either	HIGH
Can the conversations be read?	Only from the personal account	HIGH

14 WHAT WE WOULD ALSO ASK FOR

WHAT WE WOULD ASK FOR

The conversation history of the personal assistant account. With the consultant's cooperation it can be exported in minutes from the account settings. Without it, the client's solicitor can advise on the options.

WHAT WE WOULD ASK FOR

The provider's published retention and training terms for the consultant's plan as at the dates concerned, to inform the client's assessment of the confidentiality breach.

WHAT WE WOULD ASK FOR

The contracts with Clients A and B, so that the client's advisers can decide whether either client must be told.

The client should also consider whether the incident needs to be assessed under data protection law. On the information we have, the results workbook contains no personal data, and the two Client B documents contain business contact details only. That assessment is for the client and its advisers.

15 GLOSSARY OF RECORDS RELIED ON

RECORD	WHAT IT IS	WHAT IT CAN AND CANNOT SHOW
File system events (FSEvents)	macOS's log of files created, renamed, moved and removed	What happened to which path. Each event is timed by the log file that holds it, usually a window of seconds to a few minutes.
Recent-item lists	Each app's list of recently opened documents and volumes	That a file was opened, and from where, including external drives. Most lists carry no time for each entry.
App-usage records (Biome)	Minute-by-minute record of which app was in front	How long each app was in use. Kept for about four weeks only.
Power log	The Mac's record of sleep, wake and lid events	When the laptop was awake. Not who was using it.
Quarantine and download records	A log of files downloaded from the internet	The file, the time and the app that fetched it, and often the web address.
Safari history	Browsing history database	Sites visited with times. If history is cleared, a marker records when.
Trash index	The hidden index inside the Trash folder	Original location of items put in the Trash. Not the time.
Print and version records	Print-job files and saved document versions	What was printed and when; earlier saved versions of documents.

16 ABOUT THIS SAMPLE REPORT

This document is a sample. It is based on employment casework carried out by our forensic team and shows the structure, depth and wording a client receives. Names, dates, file names, device identifiers and other identifying details have been changed, and findings have been adapted so that no real person or organisation can be recognised. It is not a live case file and should not be relied on as evidence of any event.

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