

Getting a Text Off a Cell Phone

Some jerk attorney is threatening to sue one of my client's for fraud. The only problem: jerk attorney's wife sent a text, years ago, to my client acknowledging that she knew about the problem. My client, who is awesome, saved said text.

How do I get said text off his phone?

Screen shot from client is probably simplest way to get it off and authenticate it.

Otherwise you are gonna have an expert just to explain how you downloaded it off and the different ways of downloading it off and chain of custody etc.

David Seto

iPhone or Android? I use Decipher to copy and back-up messages on my iPhone. Let's you print them out as PDFs. www.deciphertools.com

Peter T. Clark, Massachusetts

There are a ton of apps that allow you to print text messages to a single pdf file. I usually tell my clients to change their phone settings so that both speakers' messages show up against a white background, then use the app and convert it to a readable pdf. (Otherwise the iPhone blue background for some texts can make them illegible). I have only had one adversary ask how the pdf was created by the client and when the client said she converted it using an ap but was willing to show him the original message which was still on her phone he dropped it and made no objection.

William E. Denver, New Jersey

If it's an old message and there is no better answer, take a digital picture of the text and save it as a pdf.

Geoff Wiggs, California

Plug it into your computer. It should be automatically recognized. Browse the folders until you find the text message.

Treat the phone like a thumb drive.

Russ Carmichael, Pennsylvania

Immediately get client to screenshot it and send it to you (via text or email) before they lose the text (by losing, breaking phone). Once you have an even crude screenshot, you can then think about how to get a prettier download of the text. I have had clients lose key texts far too many times.

Sometimes, I even wait on the phone with clients until I confirm I have received the screenshot.

Eugene Lee, California

Wait for it -- some clients don't know how to screenshot, and they end up deleting the message.

If it's that critical, have the client come into your office so you can take a picture of it or download it or screenshot it yourself.

Clayton T. Robertson, California

For the iPhone, TouchCopy 16 (or whatever the current version) allows you to download texts in a variety of formats, including PDFs and text files.

But a screenshot--or even a picture of the phone showing the message and the number it came from--should be sufficient as evidence if it is authenticated properly.

Kevin Grierson, Virginia

I use TouchCopy 16 for iOS devices. Works reasonably well, although it seems to work less reliably as time passes. I suspect it's because Apple updates their software which means that TouchCopy needs to get updated to handle it. It's a constant arms race.

TouchCopy is pretty inexpensive also. Lifetime license is \$40 or something like that.

The company that makes TouchCopy also makes an Android version called Droid Transfer. I haven't used it as I haven't had the need to handle texts on an Android device, but I'm assuming the User Interface, etc. between the two are very similar given that the same company made them.

Andy Chen

Tell the client to take the phone to their local FedEx/Kinkos, open the text message and place face down on the copy machine . . .

Brian C. Hagner, Florida