Reason I don’t like most Digital Evidence

Posted by tyrstag - 23 Sep 2011 21:53

First off, let me explain that I am not a skeptic. I have seen too much unexplainable stuff in my life to not be a believer. I just have a big problem with some things that are claimed to be evidence, but have perfectly reasonable scientific explanations.

I’m also not saying that NONE of it is evidence, I’m just saying, “Be extremely careful of calling something evidence”.

You should be skeptical of ANY digital evidence. The reason is that we live in an analog world. All digital devices convert analog images and sounds into digital formats that are not perfect representations of the original. They can introduce digital artifacts.

A digital artifact is any undesired alteration in data introduced in a digital process by an involved technique and/or technology.

Hardware malfunction: In computer graphics, visual artifacts may be generated whenever a hardware component (eg. processor, memory chip, cabling) malfunctions, causing data corruption. Malfunction may be caused by physical damage, overheating (sometimes due to GPU overclocking), etc. Common types of hardware artifacts are texture corruption and T-vertices in 3D graphics, and pixelization in MPEG compressed video.

Software malfunction: Similarly to hardware malfunction, artifacts may be caused by software issues such as bugs in the algorithms, such as decoding/encoding introducing artifacts into audio or video, or a poor pseudo-random number generator would introduce artifacts into statistical research models.

Compression: Controlled amounts of unwanted information may be generated as a result of the use of lossy compression techniques. One such case is the artifacts seen in JPEG and MPEG compression algorithms.

Aliasing: Digital imprecision generated in the process of converting analog information into digital space due to the limited granularity of digital numbering space. In computer graphics, aliasing is seen as pixelation.

The first thing that bothers me is “Orbs”.

Cameras work because light reflects off an object and back into the lens of the camera, where it hits either film or a CCD panel that records the light. That’s not so bad if you’re not using a flash (Ever notice there’s no orbs in daylight?) But when you use a flash, you’re focusing a high intensity beam of light directly in front of the camera. Anything, and I mean anything, in front of the camera is going to reflect that light back to the lens. A very small particle that is highly reflective is going to look huge and transparent, because the amount of light reflected back is higher than the size of the particle.

When using an IR video camera people will often say, “It’s not a bug or dust because it doesn’t move like dust or a bug, look it changed direction!” Any kid that has ever played with the dust in a bean of sunlight coming in a window will tell you that just moving slightly will change the direction the dust is moving. Moving your hand or blowing air through the beam makes the dust move in all directions and swirls around your hand.

Unless an orb flies up to my face and says “Hi!” it’s probably dust or a bug.

EVPs

Again, this is something that drives me crazy. There are all kinds of things that can be captured on a digital audio recorder that you may not hear real time. Most digital recorders are VERY sensitive, far more sensitive than your own ears. It can pick up things that are outside the area that you may be in, people talking in another room, a car, or truck going by.

The second thing you may not know is that the Flash Memory that is in a digital recorder has a limited lifespan. The average is about 300,000 Read/Write cycles. That means, every time you record, listen, delete, re-record, listen . . . you are slowly killing the memory. But the memory doesn’t fail all at once, it fails in blocks, at different times, you may even have failed blocks on a brand new device. If you happen to have a failed block in the middle of a recording, you may hear part of a previous recording, a loud pop, or just some weird noise.

Another thing that digital recorders may have trouble with is “Noise” from other digital devices, like cell phones, cordless phones, wireless network devices and even microwave ovens. They can actually pickup sounds from those devices. Ever been near a speaker when you receive a cell phone call and hear the speaker make a “ch ch ch ch ch ch” sound? It was especially bad with Nextel phones, but all cell phones do it.

And last but not least is the “If you believe it, you will hear it” syndrome. I have had people bring me an EVP and say, “It very clearly is Abe Lincoln reciting the Gettysburg Address!” I listen and it sounds like the noise my dogs stomachs make when they get into my frozen Burrito stash. I’ll look at the person and

see they are very proud of their find. I almost hate to tell them that I can't make out a single coherent word.

EMF

Electro Magnetic Field . . . The name says it all. What gives off an Electro Magnetic Field? Damn near everything. The Earth itself has a MASSIVE EMF; it's what protects us from Solar Radiation and being burned to a crisp by the Sun's rays. The Sun also has an EMF that makes the Earth's EMF seem like a little spark. Ferrous metals (Iron, Steel) can have an EMF, any type of electric motor (like the ones in video cameras), magnets obviously and even the Human body can give off a slight EMF.

I hate when I hear someone say, "There must be a ghost here, the EMF went up 0.3". Really? 0.3? A lamp cord can give off 30-50 milligauss! Your cell phone while on a call can be in the 100 milligauss range. Radios, TVs and Walkie-Talkies can also give off pretty high EMF.

If you're on a steel ship, like an old warship, the EMF readings can have wild swings from one room to the next. Part of the ship may have been magnetized by the motion of the water slapping against its sides.

That is just some of the things that can go wrong. I will add to this list and I'm always open to discuss.

--Tyrstag

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Re: Reason I don't like most Digital Evidence

Posted by Wes_Forsythe - 26 Sep 2011 23:50

I am sorry...did that come across as a defense of Zaffis?

Granted, depending on your particular school of thought (I was admittedly referring to the people that I have met in the field - small sampling) he might be regarded as a moon-bat, charlatan, (insert word of your choice here). I just meant that a lot of people like him and listen to what he has to say. That's all. He is not some fringe element that only a few have heard of whether that is good or bad.

My post then went on to say that I disagree with him on several points. Those are just my opinions and I hope that was clear. I state that I believe in object attachments, but that I think they are not any more

common than other types of attachments. His show makes it sound like most hauntings have that basis and I disagree. Once again...just an opinion.

He claims the title demonologist. That is not part of my studies so I tend to keep my opinions on that very limited. Yes, I believe in them. Yes, they respond to religeous ceremony whether by divinity or by intent. No, they are not common. Once again those are opinions.

So where was my error?

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Re: Reason I don’t like most Digital Evidence

Posted by Amanda_O - 26 Sep 2011 23:51

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Steven Matrix wrote:

Well said Pete. Since the real meaning of the word "demonologist" changed, people can make it whatever they want to today to go with whatever agenda they may have.

It seems to me that the meaning was changed to maybe keep people from discovering the truth; meaning that what was known as "supernatural" was probably more "natural". That's one of the reasons we exist here; to discover hidden truths.

I have to agree. Virtually every period of mankind's history is riddled with forms of entities that were either benevolent or hostile to them. They've apparently been around as long as mankind..probably longer. I don't do the whole religion thing because I understand that to be a man made construct. It's a way that a group of people perhaps perceive and believe in the divine but that does NOT make it FACT.

I get really put out with so-called 'experts' making claims they're going to clean it all up. The funny thing is I never hear a follow up story. I do believe that there are evil entities, demons, diamons, djinn..whatever you want to call them out there. I also believe that at the end of the day we are no closer to really knowing what they are and what they are really doing. I believe providing we don't blow ourselves up we may just learn what these beings are and what roll they play in the grand scheme of things

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Re: Reason I don’t like most Digital Evidence

Posted by tyrstag - 26 Sep 2011 23:52

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osty wrote:

Just to add, ghosting can also happen as kind of a bleed through if you record on both sides of the tape. So when you record just use one side of the tape.

It can be really creepy sounding then, because it will be playing backwards.

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Re: Reason I don’t like most Digital Evidence
Posted by tyrstag - 26 Sep 2011 23:56

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I don't believe anyone said you were in error, or that you were defending Zaffis. We're just continuing the discussion.

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Re: Reason I don’t like most Digital Evidence
Posted by Wes_Forsythe - 27 Sep 2011 00:01

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I quote "While I don't know John and am not in your type of circle Wes, I would like to know how he got a "good reputation". I've seen similar instances where people say others have a good reputation and brag on another's platform. My question is "Who says so?" I would have to disagree that he's a good demonologist [at this time anyway] as who has the proof that he is? Nobody."

Just sorta sounded that way. Maybe I read it wrong. That why I asked for the clarification.

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Re: Reason I don’t like most Digital Evidence
Posted by Steven Matrix - 27 Sep 2011 00:04

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Wes_Forsythe wrote:

I am sorry...did that come across as a defense of Zaffis?

Granted, depending on your particular school of thought (I was admittedly referring to the people that I have met in the field - small sampling) he might be regarded as a moon-bat, charlatan, (insert word of your choice here). I just meant that a lot of people like him and listen to what he has to say. That's all. He is not some fringe element that only a few have heard of whether that is good or bad.

My post then went on to say that I disagree with him on several points. Those are just my opinions and I hope that was clear. I state that I believe in object attachments, but that I think they are not any more common than other types of attachments. His show makes it sound like most hauntings have that basis and I disagree. Once again...just an opinion.

He claims the title demonologist. That is not part of my studies so I tend to keep my opinions on that very limited. Yes, I believe in them. Yes, they respond to religeous ceremony whether by divinity or by intent. No, they are not common. Once again those are opinions.

So where was my error?

Error? I see no errors in your post Wes. You said that in your field John is respected. I was responding to "those in your field"; not you per se. You never came across as defending him. Maybe I was a little strong and I apologize if I was.

I do believe in dark entities. I don't refer to them as demons as I stay as far from religious terms as I can; only because it is part of my journey's past. As far as them responding to religious ceremonies; I would have to say that anything that the catholic church has to say about their power over spirits I will dismiss [a whole other subject in itself]. I completely agree however about the intent. Couldn't we just do without the titles though? Lol.

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Re: Reason I don’t like most Digital Evidence
Posted by Wes_Forsythe - 27 Sep 2011 00:10

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Now we can have a discussion...lol.

My belief is that not all "dark" entities are demons by the way. Plenty of human spirits are evil I suspect. And there is a lot of earthy elemental stuff that I know nothing about.

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Re: Reason I don’t like most Digital Evidence
Posted by Steven Matrix - 27 Sep 2011 00:16

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Amanda_O wrote:

Steven Matrix wrote:

Well said Pete. Since the real meaning of the word "demonologist" changed, people can make it whatever they want to today to go with whatever agenda they may have.

It seems to me that the meaning was changed to maybe keep people from discovering the truth; meaning that what was known as "supernatural" was probably more "natural". That's one of the reasons we exist here; to discover hidden truths.

I have to agree. Virtually every period of mankind's history is riddled with forms of entities that were either benevolent or hostile to them. They've apparently been around as long as mankind..probably longer. I don't do the whole religion thing because I understand that to be a man made construct. It's a way that a group of people perhaps perceive and believe in the divine but that does NOT make it FACT.

I get really put out with so-called 'experts' making claims they're going to clean it all up. The funny thing is I never hear a follow up story.

You know why man constructed it? Control and cha-ching [$$$]. You won't hear a follow up story. They have to keep repeating their claims so the money will keep rolling in. Lol.

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Re: Reason I don’t like most Digital Evidence

Posted by Steven Matrix - 27 Sep 2011 00:24

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Wes_Forsythe wrote:

Now we can have a discussion...lol.

My belief is that not all "dark" entities are demons by the way. Plenty of human spirits are evil I suspect. And there is a lot of earthy elemental stuff that I know nothing about.

Agreed. I think we can all agree that there's more that we don't know than what we do.

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