

## BOOK REVIEW

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### *A Review of The Scientific Examination of Documents: Methods and Techniques*

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**REFERENCE:** Ellen, D., *The Scientific Examination of Documents: Methods and Techniques*, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1989.

This well-written text provides a clear and concise overview of document examination problems and the methods utilized in attempting to resolve them. At times, the author seems to cover all variables that might be encountered in a given problem, which reflects his considerable experience in this field. The book is directed primarily to the user of document examination services, although the practitioner will find it extremely useful and informative as a quick reference source.

In a broad-based introduction, the author provides solid general information about the field of document examination, methods of examination, practitioners in the field, professional organizations, and sources of literature. Four chapters are then devoted to the important subject of handwriting comparison. Of particular interest is the author's different approach to the discussion of handwriting individuality. Identity factors and variables are covered in considerable detail and presented with an interesting perspective.

In a chapter on the materials of handwritten documents, the author considers at length the methods of differentiating writing inks, a subject of importance because of the significant advances in this area in recent years. Discussions on typewriters and printers, recognition of commercial printing methods, and possibilities for investigation of photocopies are quite thorough considering the length of the book. Other less prevalent document problems are touched upon. The use of photography in document work and the presentation of document evidence in court complete the text.

The book has a limited number of illustrations, so more time is spent reading for understanding than looking at pictures. The reference sources at the end of each chapter are excellent and the reader may find more illustrations in those articles. Certainly, this book is a worthy addition to one's forensic science library.

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