Standard Guide for Image Comparison Opinions

WHAT IS AN AAFS STANDARD FACTSHEET?

The AAFS produces clear, concise, and easy-to-understand factsheets to summarize the contents of technical and professional forensic science standards on the OSAC Registry. They are <u>not</u> intended to provide an interpretation for any portion of a proposed standard.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROPOSED STANDARD?

This standard lists the categories of opinions to be reached when conducting comparisons of images depicting people, objects, or scenes. The opinion categories in this standard are not to be used for the comparison of images of impressions (e.g., tool marks, friction ridge).

It is a framework that all digital multimedia disciplines involving image comparisons are to use to develop and validate discipline-specific opinion categories or scales. The use of likelihood ratios is not mandated, but requirements are included for when a likelihood ratio is used to express the strength of evidence.

The standard refers the reader to FISWG and SWGDE documents for the topics of forming, documenting, and reporting an opinion.

WHY IS THIS PROPOSED STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

Currently, there are no standardized opinion scales with associated validation data for many of the disciplines that compare images of people, objects, or scenes. By providing a standardized framework of opinions to practitioners, this standard will increase harmonization and consistency across and within the digital multimedia forensic disciplines that compare images.

The standard focuses on an evidence-centric scale, prohibiting terms such as 'individualize,' 'identification,' and 'exclusion'.

> This OSAC Proposed Standard has been sent to <u>ASTM International (ASTM)</u> for further development and publication. Get involved as a member or by providing public comment.

HOW IS THIS PROPOSED STANDARD USED, AND WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS?

This framework of opinion categories is to be used when developing and validating discipline-specific opinion scales. In the absence of discipline-wide opinion scales, a forensic science service provider (FSSP) can use this standard to develop an FSSP-specific opinion scale.

The opinion categories presented in the framework describe the relative level of support provided by the data given common source and different source propositions. Those categories are:

- Strong Support for Different Source
- Support for Different Source*
- Inconclusive
- Support for Common Source*
- Strong Support for Common Source

*The standard allows for these two opinion categories to be subdivided into more specific intervals when empirical research demonstrates that practitioners can accurately and reliably apply the more specific categories.

The discipline, or the FSSP, is expected to define the necessary criteria to form an opinion for each category.