

Collecting Evidence From Microsoft Teams Private And Shared Channels

Collecting evidence from Microsoft Teams private and shared channels requires understanding where data lives, as a collection scoped to the team may miss them. This guide details storage locations, lifecycle, holds, and reconstruction for UK litigators.

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TEAMSCHANNELEVIDENCE · A GUIDE FOR UK LAWYERS Collecting Evidence from Microsoft Teams Private and Shared Channels The Conversations That Live Outside the Team's Own Mailbox COMPUTER FORENSICS LAB

§ ABOUT THE AUTHOR PREPARED BY COMPUTER FORENSICS LAB E-DISCOVERY TEAM ESTABLISHED 2007 · LONDON ISO 17025-ALIGNED PROCEDURES MICROSOFT 365 COLLECTIONS

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§ 06 · THE EVIDENCE ' SSHAPE Reconstruction, review and the shape of channel evidence 81 chat-unitisation decisions made explicitly and disclosed in the protocol (guide 94): reviewable, producible

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DIRECTORY / SIDE TENANT MEMBER PER- MAILBOXES CHANNEL DELETED/
(COMPLIANCE SHARE POINT RECOVERABLE COPIES) SITE ADMIN / CLIENT-
EXTERNAL AUDIT LAYER CACHES (SHARED)

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§ HOW A SPECIALIST LABORATORY CAN ASSIST Working with Computer Forensics Lab
Speak to a forensic examiner, not a salesperson. INSTRUCTTHELAB
NEWENQUIRIESEMAILE - DISCOVERY

Questions and answers

We collected the whole team. Why would private channels be missing?

Because "the whole team" means the team's group mailbox and Share Point site, and private channels write to neither: their messages go to member mailboxes and their files to separate sites (§3). The collection was complete for standard channels and blind to the rest: Example 1's omission, and the reason the census comes first.

A private-channel member has left the company. Is their contribution lost?

Not necessarily: their compliance copies persist in their mailbox as long as it exists (inactive mailboxes under hold survive the leaver process), other members' mailboxes hold the same messages for their overlapping membership periods, and the channel site, audit layer and device caches supply alternates (§8, Example 2). What loses the contribution is a mailbox purged before anyone held it: the clock the census exists to beat.

How do we know the census is complete?

From the administration layer: Teams admin data, directory records and Graph enumeration list channels by type with creation, membership and site details, and audit logs record channel lifecycle events: the census is drawn from those records and reconciled against them, not from asking users. On contested completeness, an independent examiner's enumeration under agreed terms settles it (§7).

Can deleted private channels be recovered?

Within the platform's restore window (currently around 30 days, verify per matter), the channel can be restored; afterwards, message copies survive in member mailboxes subject to retention, and the channel's site follows its own deletion and retention rules (§4). Two clocks, both checked: and the audit layer proves the channel existed either way.

The channel was shared with another company. Whose disclosure is it?

Both: the host tenant holds the channel messages and the host-side site; the external or g an is at i on holds its members' view and any files shared from its own storage (§4, Example 3). The host party discloses what it holds and identifies what it does not; the rest is reached through the other party's obligations or third-party disclosure.

Does this matter for small disputes, or only large investigations?

It matters wherever the candid conversation may have happened, which is exactly what private channels are for: an employment claim's decisive thread is as likely to sit there as a cartel's. The census is proportionate at any scale: a morning's work that determines whether the collection is complete or the certificate is wrong. cflab. u k · e-disc ove r y. u k ©2026
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