

Google Vault In Litigation

Google Vault is a preservation backbone and a bounded collector for Google Workspace evidence. This guide clarifies its strengths, where its reach and fidelity stop, and how to integrate it with independent forensic collection for UK litigation. It addresses common mistakes and technical limitations.

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GOOGLEVAULT · A GUIDE FOR UK LAWYERS Google Vault in Litigation Capabilities, Limits and the Boundary with Independent Forensic Collection COMPUTER FORENSICS LAB

§ ABOUT THE AUTHOR PREPARED BY COMPUTER FORENSICS LAB E-DISCOVERY TEAM
INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION CPR PART 35 EXPERT REPORT S FULL
CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY DOCUMENTATION

§ CONTENTS In this guide 01 Executive summary 02 The problem in plain English: the excellent tool and the quiet narrowing 03 What Vault does well: holds, retention, search, export 04 Where Vault stops: reach, fidelity and the o per at or 05 The three questions: trust, structures, downstream 06 Hybrid patterns: Vault plus independence 07 Vault in correspondence: what to ask and what to offer 08 Source architecture: where else the evidence lives 09 Worked examples 10 Common mistakes and technical limitations 11 Questions to ask · Suggested wording 12 Checklist and red flags · When to involve a digital forensic expert 13 Frequently asked questions 14 Glossary · References · Disclaimer · How a specialist laboratory can assist

§ 01 · ORIENTATION Executive summary THE HEADLINE POINT: VAULTISTHEESTATE ' SPRESERVATIONBACKBONEANDA BOUNDEDCOLLECTOR: KNOWWHICHJOBYOUAREGIVINGIT

§ 02 · FIRST PRINCIPLES The problem in plain English: the excellent tool and the quiet narrowing

§ 03 · THESTRENGTHS What Vault does well: holds, retention, search, export

§ 04 · THEBOUNDARIES Where Vault stops: reach, fidelity and the o per at or

§ 05 · THE FRAMEWORK The three questions: trust, structures, downstream

§ 06 · WORKINGTOGETHER Hybrid patterns: Vault plus independence

§ 07 · THE CORRESPONDENCE Vault in correspondence: what to ask and what to offer

§ 08 · THEWIDERMAP Source architecture: where else the evidence lives EVIDENCE (HOLDS + STRUCTURAL MIRRORS / VAULT API / DEVICE EXPORT) ROUTE CACHES ADMIN COUNTERPARTS DELETED / REPORTS + BACKUPS RECOVERABLE

§ 09 · IN THE WILD Worked examples EXAMPLE1 · THESNAPSHOTEXPORTANDTHEVANISHEDAUTHORSHIP EXAMPLE2 · THEFINANCEDIRECTOR ' S OWN EXPORT EXAMPLE3 ·

THE OPERATIONS LOG THAT DATED THE STRATEGY

§ 10 · WHERE IT GOES WRONG Common mistakes and technical limitations Common mistakes
Technical limitations

§ 11 · INTERROGATORIES & DRAFTING AIDS Questions to ask · Suggested wording Ask
your client Ask your opponent Ask your e Discovery / forensic provider SUGGESTED
WORDING · ROUTE - AND - VERIFICATION CLAUSE FOR THE DISCLOSURE PROTOCOL

§ 12 · QUICK CONTROL Checklist and red flags · When to involve a digital forensic expert The
Vault checklist Red flags When to involve a digital forensic expert

§ 13 · COMMON QUESTIONS Frequently asked questions Is a Vault export defensible
disclosure on its own? When do we genuinely need collection beyond Vault? Can Vault exports
be manipulated by the operator or? The opponent says the content expired under retention
before any hold. What is the sequence? How does Vault compare with Purview for a firm
running both ecosystems? What single Vault artefact should we secure first in any new matter?

§ 14 · REFERENCE Glossary Sources and authoritative references DISCLAIMER

§ HOW A SPECIALIST LABORATORY CAN ASSIST Working with Computer Forensics Lab
Speak to a forensic examiner, not a salesperson. INSTRUCT THE LAB
NEW ENQUIRIES EMAIL - DISCOVERY

Questions and answers

Is a Vault export defensible disclosure on its own?

For the uncontested bulk, with metadata files retained, counts reconciled and a fidelity statement attached: yes, routinely. What makes it defensible is misassignment: contested custodians self-operating, structure disputes answered with snapshots, completeness asserted past the reach map. Defensibility is a property of the routing decision and its paper work, not of the tool: which is this guide's single sentence.

When do we genuinely need collection beyond Vault?

Three triggers, from §5: trust (a perimeter custodian would otherwise operate), structures (the case turns on revisions, threading, settings or sharing histories), downstream (the production must prove itself to a hostile expert). Any one suffices for the affected sources; none moves the uncontested bulk off Vault. The routing table, not an all-or-nothing instinct, is the deliverable.

Can Vault exports be manipulated by the operator?

The realistic risks are scope and query manipulation (or error: Example 2's five months) rather than content forgery: exports carry self-describing metadata, and Vault's operations are audit-logged. Which is precisely why the safeguards are procedural: documented queries, retained metadata files, count reconciliation, supervision or verification for interested operators: and why an opponent's refusal to produce the operations log is itself information.

The opponent says the content expired under retention before any hold. What is the sequence?

Paper first: retention rules with change history against the duty's date (Example 3's seam), the hold report's placement dates, the operations log. Then reach: trash windows, any pre-existing holds from other matters (guide 58's Example 3), backup platforms. Then the ensemble: devices, counterparts, circulated copies. "Expired" is a checkable claim with a paper trail, and this series' standing rule applies: test it, never inherit it.

How does Vault compare with Purview for a firm running both ecosystems?

The strategy is identical; the boundaries differ in detail: what each reaches, what each export flattens, where each logs its operations. The transferable core is the framework: preserve through the native tool immediately, route by trust/structures/downstream, verify where operators are interested, and demand the operations paper work in disputes. Guides 51-52 and 58-59 are deliberately parallel so teams can carry one method across both estates.

What single Vault artefact should we secure first in any new matter?

The hold report: scope, services, placement dates: created by placing the holds themselves, today. It is simultaneously the preservation act, the recoverability watershed for every later question, and the first exhibit of a defensible process. Everything else in this guide can be decided next week; the holds cannot. cflab. uk · e-discove ry. uk ©2026 Computer Forensics Lab Ltd · cflab.uk · e-discovery.uk · info@cflab.uk · +44 (0)20 7164 6915 Page 15 of 17