



SOFTCAT

Transforming Digital Forensics

Background and context

The demand for digital forensics is overwhelming Digital Forensic (DF) Units, causing backlogs that delay investigations and prosecutions. This impacts victims, witnesses, and suspects, especially in crimes dependent on reliable DF analysis.

- Cases are collapsing due to missing or damaged evidence, digital backlogs, and poor-quality forensic practices. The Government has acknowledged the need for reform.
- Digital forensics is more than 20 times the volume of all other police data combined.
- The complexity of DF presents significant challenges for all forces due to rapid technological advancements and increased risk and demand.
- To deliver on priorities such as protecting children from sexual exploitation, breaking County Lines, disrupting terrorism, and reducing serious violence, a proportionate, ethical step-change and collective approach are necessary.



Over 95% of all crimes have a digital element including phones, laptops, CCTV and IoT devices.

“Forensic science is not working for police, forensic scientists, lawyers, or the public.”

Rebuilding forensic science review synopsis

Technical and operational challenges

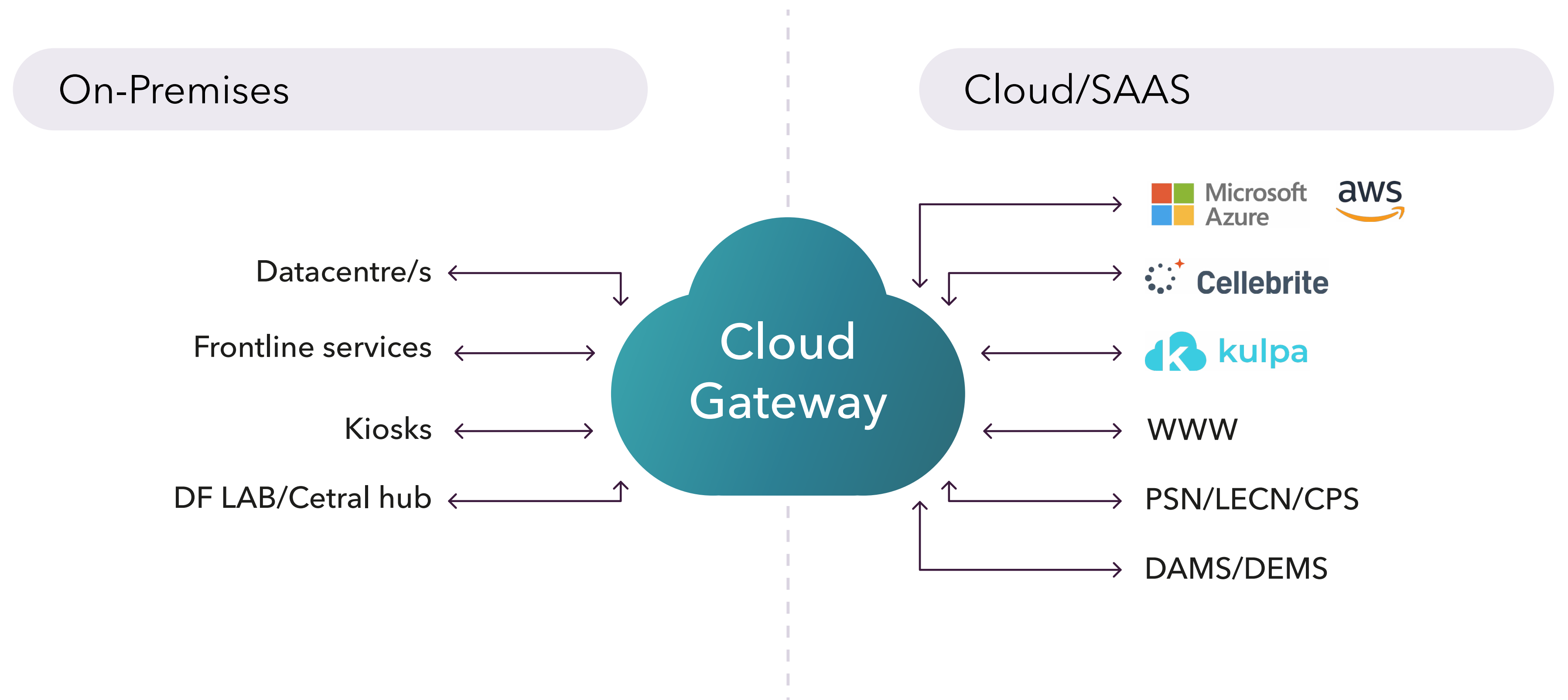
Digital Forensics teams face an ever-growing list of serious technical and operational challenges:

- 95% of criminal cases involve a digital footprint
- Exponential growth in data
- Demand outpacing supply
- Retention of staff
- Pace of change
- High levels of technical debt
- Complex ecosystem of partners and suppliers
- Fragmented tech ecosystem
- Lack of cloud skills in DDaT and Forensics teams
- Compliance with various accreditations and legislation complex (ISO/MOPI/GDPR/UKAS)
- Historic funding has been department based
- Security challenges storing sensitive and potentially illegal data on Police networks
- Difficult to scale and predict technology costs for annual budgets
- Hubs have limited network connectivity to move ingested data
- Constrained teams in a growing area of demand
- No cross-team shared, agile, scalable storage solution
- Ineffective sharing of data with Officers
- Limited inter-team working and cross-team working
- Admin overheads / burden and lack of visibility on case progress
- Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery concerns
- Reliance on physical media creating security concerns and manual transportation
- Reliance on a manual tape process and legacy Tapes

Softcat digital forensics reference architecture

Softcat in partnership with our key tech vendors have produced a validated digital forensics reference architecture to provide secure, performant, scalable, resilient digital forensics services to Police Forces.

The solution is modular and enables a hybrid approach to DF infrastructure whilst maintaining relevant security controls.



Softcat digital forensics reference architecture

Key components

- Single, cohesive commercial arrangement for all key DF vendors
- Secure by design architecture
- Software defined network to enable seamless connectivity
- Managed network service to reduce technical ownership
- Options for on-premise, hybrid and full cloud storage
- Options for on-premise, hybrid and cloud OIC review
- Low cost, flexible, secure archiving of data
- Secure connectivity to forensics cloud services
- Secure connectivity to external agencies/partners
- Services from Cellebrite, Kulpa, Microsoft, AWS, Qumulo, Cloud Gateway

Operational and technical benefits

- Designed in line with UKAS accreditations, FSR, ISO17025 and NPCC guidance
- Enterprise grade DDaT vendors and architecture
- Cloud appropriate using Azure or AWS for long term retention and archiving
- Unstructured data management tools to provide MOPI compliant tagging and retention
- Centralised data store for all retained DFU data
- Single management pane for audit and compliance
- Officer in charge review platform for rapid OIC review
- Self-service analysis compute environment
- Minimal impact on IT/DDaT teams
- Vendor neutral solution designed to fit into existing force architecture
- Up to 400% faster review and analysis times
- Integrated with Cellebrite, Magnet and MSAB toolsets and infrastructure
- Cost effective with predictable, linear cost increases over time

Why Softcat for digital forensics?

- ✦ Extensive experience delivering into Police customers
- ✦ Single commercial route to market
- ✦ Security vetted account and technical teams
- ✦ Hybrid cloud model balances scalability and security
- ✦ Partnerships with key DF vendors - Cellebrite, Magnet, MSAB, Forensic Analytics etc
- ✦ Sovereign, Police assured services and PASF logistics hub
- ✦ Agnostic, broad portfolio of vendors





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Find out more www.softcat.com

