



International Association for Identification
Position Statement on Conclusions, Qualified Opinions, and Probability Modeling

February 5, 2017

The International Association for Identification (IAI) has a long history of providing guidance to the fingerprint comparison discipline through conferences, publications, and recommendations of best practices. The IAI supports the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) in their efforts to develop national standards for all the relevant forensic science disciplines.

In 1973, the IAI published the first in a series of landmark resolutions clearly stating that “no valid basis exists at this time for requiring that a pre-determined minimum number of friction ridge characteristics must be present in two impressions in order to establish positive identification.” In 1979 and 1980, the IAI precluded members from reporting “possible, probable, or likely friction ridge identifications”. In 2010 the IAI rescinded this prohibition recognizing that conclusions are inferences and that the weight of each conclusion is dependent on the data supporting the conclusion.

It is the position of the IAI that examiners are encouraged to articulate conclusion decisions as specifically as possible, as to not overstate decisions regarding source attribution. In addition to stating conclusions, examiners are encouraged to state the basis for resulting conclusions; including the associative strength and limitations. The strength and limitations of conclusions may include the quality and quantity of data, the validity of method/mathematical model used, and the repeatability of the conclusion. Examiners are encouraged to continually reassess methods and/or mathematical models used to arrive at the best conclusions possible.

Members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the IAI Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct, sections 2.01 and 2.02 for further clarification.

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