The ever-growing popularity of social networking websites has created a vast network of investigative resources. Not only can information about suspects, victims, witnesses and possible co-conspirators be obtained, but a virtual goldmine of evidence of various criminal activities can be unearthed. MySpace.com alone has more than 200 million user profiles that can be tapped for critical information, evidence and leads.

Dealing with the content and construct of social networking sites are some of the most significant challenges investigators face today. Sites such as MySpace and Facebook present major challenges for investigators who need to locate information, find linkages between people and use the sites for law enforcement purposes. Many crimes are committed and/or evidence of criminal activity is stored on these sites—the list ranges from stalking to identity theft to vandalism and child pornography. Predators gain access to children via these sites; gangs and terrorists are conducting criminal planning via these networks; and a variety of evidence is posted on these sites, such as data, photos and video. To make these investigations even more challenging, social networking sites are not constructed similar to, nor navigated like, traditional websites. SEARCH has become a knowledge leader in this specific area, having provided dozens of agencies nationwide with technical assistance, made presentations at many national events, and prepared nationally disseminated investigative guides on social networking sites.

Our research shows that investigators have a limited knowledge base of social networking sites and, thus, investigative ability is limited. Research also shows that little to no effective training in this area is readily available to law enforcement. Through Social Networking Sites: Investigative Tools and Techniques, SEARCH offers a one-day, hands-on training class for law enforcement investigators on this complex issue.

What you will learn
Investigators will learn the nuances of:
- MySpace* profile setup
- MySpace page enhancement
- Locating and tracing users by MySpace profiles
- Searching MySpace for relevant case information
- Education about various resources and utilizing external tools to enhance reactive and proactive investigations, such as Google, Firefox and the SEARCH Investigative Toolbar
- My #1 Friend is a Cop Project, which involves law enforcement agencies creating a MySpace profile that youths can link to and display as a “friend” on their MySpace profiles. This innovative project helps youths stay safe from online predators by displaying a police badge on their profiles and offering them an easy way to report inappropriate messages. A departmental MySpace page also acts as a means of providing valuable information to the community.

Investigators who attend this course will receive a license for MySpace Visualizer, a tool that enables you to easily generate animated clickable maps of connected “friends” from a MySpace profile. This program is a critical investigative tool that provides leads and a graphical look at an individual’s friends, acquaintances and associates.

Enrollment in each course is limited to 20 persons.
Register today at www.search.org/training
Who should attend
Information available on social networking sites has the potential to impact every area of an investigation. All investigators, whether high tech crime, gangs, homicide, vice, property crimes, narcotics or other details, need hands-on, expert education on how to find and gather information from social networking sites to aid in their investigations. Although this course addresses using Internet technology, this course is non-technical in nature, so all investigators—regardless of their technical background—are encouraged to attend.

One of the primary missions of SEARCH is to provide cutting-edge High Technology Crime Investigation training to law enforcement officers and other investigators nationwide. Check the SEARCH Web site for more details: http://www.search.org.

Dates
www.search.org/training

Time
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Location
SEARCH’s National Criminal Justice Computer Laboratory and Training Center
7311 Greenhaven Drive, Suite 145,
Sacramento, CA 95831

Fee: $215
— Advance registration is required to reserve space in this course.
— The course fee is nonrefundable if cancellation is made within 30 days of the start of training.

* Note: Although this course examines various social networking websites, its focus is on MySpace because the tools and techniques learned on MySpace—the number one social networking site in the U.S.—can easily be transferred and applied to other networking sites.