

KenoshaNews.Com

Trial trails Web searcher

Feb. 8, 2008

Computer expert details Internet searches in Jensen murder case

By Jessica Hansen

Read & React

ELKHORN - Jurors in the Mark Jensen murder trial followed a trail of Internet pages Thursday to try to figure out who was searching the Jensen family computer for poisoning in the days before Julie Jensen died.

A computer shadowing tool helped jurors peer over the shoulder of the unknown user. The prosecution says it was Mark Jensen; the defense insists it was Julie Jensen.

The Internet history was erased, but computer expert Martin Koch was able to track the user's activity through temporary Internet files.

Koch could tell which links the user followed by dragging his mouse over the text. If it changed color that indicated someone had gone down the Internet rabbit hole.

Jurors watched as Koch clicked and scrolled through Yahoo! search results for ethylene glycol, the poisonous chemical common in antifreeze. A search for "ethylene glycol poisoning" on Dec. 2, 1998, generated 35,620 hits. At least two of those searches were revisited Dec. 3, 1998, the day Julie Jensen died.

At the top of the list, the user passed on a site promising an antidote for poisoning from the antifreeze chemical, Koch said.

Someone followed a link for oxalic acid, the deadly byproduct of ethylene glycol consumption. From that link, Koch said, the user clicked on connections for poisoning symptoms, such as rapid breathing, coma and hypoxia, in which a person's skin turns blue.

The user also apparently picked and passed through an alphabetical index of diseases, poisons and symptoms. Under poisons, the user clicked from antifreeze to ethylene glycol to symptoms.

The symptoms link led to information about consciousness, coma, rapid heart rate and rapid breathing.

Koch's tour was tedious. But prosecutor Robert Jambois insisted the slow sightseeing expedition was worth it.

"I want the jury to see what the user would have seen," Jambois said.

Jurors could not see everything on the Jensen family computer.

The Internet history was deleted at least four times in the fall of 1998, Koch said, including Nov. 22, Nov. 29, Dec. 2 and Dec. 3.

The last bit of history was deleted at 7:42 a.m. Dec. 3, about 75 minutes after an early morning

search for "ethylene glycol poisoning."

As he did with the Web sites, Koch carefully clicked through the steps needed to delete Internet history. Jambois counted the steps, eight in all.

"You've got to make a decision to take each of those steps?" Jambois asked.

"That's correct," Koch said.