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Facial Image Comparison Best Practices for Markups and Annotations

1. Scope

1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide best practices and guidelines for utilizing markups and annotations during a facial image comparison.

1.2 In the context of this document, a non-annotated image shall accompany the image(s) containing markups and annotations to serve as a reference for the analysis and comparison.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International Standard¹ E3149 Facial Image Comparison Feature List for Morphological Analysis Guideline (<https://www.astm.org/Standards/E3149.htm>)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *annotation*: *n*—an explanation added to a diagram that details a particular anatomical feature or references a markup added to the facial images

3.1.2 *markup*: *n*—an identifier (e.g., symbols, shapes) added to a diagram that highlights a particular anatomical feature

3.1.3 *spatial relationship*, *n*—specifies how a feature is positioned on the face relative to another feature. When this term is used in this guide, it does not mean to imply that the precise value of this dimension shall be determined, but rather the relative size of this dimension compared to the overall width or height of the face, if not otherwise specified.

¹ For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

4. Best Practices for Markups

4.1 This section refers to the best practices for documenting compared facial features during a facial image comparison.

4.2 The following types of markups and annotations should be utilized to clearly indicate noteworthy facial features that were assessed and evaluated during the analysis and comparison processes. Markups and annotations between the images should be clearly visible and maintain a consistent format. The type, color, and number of markups used will be agency specific but should fall within the below guidelines:

4.2.1 Circles or boxes – to outline specific features such as facial marks (e.g., scars, moles, etc.);

4.2.2 Hash marks or brackets – to illustrate relative distance (spatial relationship) (e.g., intercanthal distance, size of the nose, etc.) or to highlight a grouping of features (e.g., striae or facial marks, etc.); and

4.2.3 Arrows, numbers, or dots – to indicate specific facial features.

4.3 Examiners shall not utilize the following types of markups, as doing so would introduce contextual bias or obstruction of facial features within the report.

4.3.1 Draw or trace on facial features;

4.3.2 Apply text or text boxes over the head, face, or neck;

4.3.3 Obstruct annotated facial features via markup; or

4.3.4 Clutter or overlap markups.

5. Best Practices for Anatomical Annotation

5.1 This section refers to the best practices for practitioners when annotating compared facial features. A morphological analysis must accompany a forensic facial comparison and should fall within the below guidelines.

5.2 Practitioners are encouraged to use anatomically correct language per the ASTM E3149 Facial Image Comparison Feature List for Morphological Analysis Guideline. Practitioners may also use layman's terms in addition to anatomically correct language.

5.2.1 Practitioners shall not use words such as unique, significant, same, identical, or exact to describe a specific feature. This language would suggest the features are derived from the same source which is not scientifically or statistically supported.

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