

Member Spotlight: Brandon Rabidou

DAPA member **Brandon Rabidou** is currently a second-year graduate student in the University of Delaware's Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. This native Californian came to University of Delaware for its proximity to Washington, D.C., and New York City, as well as the strong reputation of the MPA program (Brandon was referred to the MPA program by an alumnus). As a requirement of the MPA program, Brandon was responsible for finding himself an internship in a public or nonprofit agency for the summer of 2011. By the end of his exhaustive search, Brandon landed an internship at the FBI.

Brandon's interest in the federal government led him to apply to the FBI's Honors Internship program. After being selected into the program, Brandon had to go through an extensive background-investigation process that took several months. While Brandon was originally selected for a paid internship, federal budget negotiations froze internship funding, and Brandon elected to continue to serve as an unpaid intern. After clearing his background investigation, Brandon was selected to work at one of the 16 Regional Computer Forensic Laboratories (RCFL) in San Diego, Calif.



Regional Computer Forensic Laboratories are training and examination centers that support investigations of digital evidence in a wide variety of areas. One of the unique aspects of the RCFLs is that they unify the experience and resources of federal, state, and local law enforcement. As an example of the multijurisdictional nature of RCFLs, Brandon was able to work with staff from the FBI, California Highway Patrol, and San Diego Police Department (as well as many others). The San Diego Regional Computer Forensic Laboratory (SDRCFL) has 16 of these partner agencies working together under one roof. San Diego also has the distinct honor of being the first RCFL in the nation and it has served as a model for the expansion of the National Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory program. Brandon was able to work directly with SDRCFI's Director.

While working for the SDRCFI, Brandon was able to get a variety of unique experiences. For most of the summer, he received basic training on using digital forensic tools as well as other hardware that helps the SDRCFI function. Brandon created future expansion plans for the SDRCFI as he has a B.S. in Public Planning (from Northern Arizona University). During the summer, Brandon also was able to go on search warrant–legitimized searches, which are essential tools in fighting cybercrimes. The picture above shows Brandon “verifying the accuracy” of the FBI's gun arsenal at a “shooting range day.” Without a doubt, Brandon had a wonderful experience working with the FBI, and he always comments about how impressive the SDRCFI staff members are.

Brandon is currently finishing his MPA and will be graduating in May 2012. Currently, he is job-hunting and is excited at the prospect of beginning a long and rewarding career of public service.