

# SE3R: AN OVERVIEW

## Note-taking

- All note-taking – even that using a ‘time line’ – is a reduced version of original detail.
- Note-taking always implies:

### Selective attention

- Scanning for ‘key facts’.
- Typical yardstick [criterion] for selection: relevance.

### Editing

- Limited extraction of detail: “bullet points” – often compressed or generalised.
- Deletion of the rest!

### Extreme risk of failing to detect critical detail

- Potentially significant detail failing the ‘relevance’ test.
- Detail that was not disclosed at all.
- Detail disclosed in an odd way.

### Limited awareness of the original detail

### Limited remembrance of the original detail

## **SE3R is NOT note-taking**

- SE3R is the opposite of conventional note taking.**
- SE3R is a “maximum capture, maximum grasp” technique based on linguistics and psychology:**
  - how people disclose detail**
  - how we process disclosed detail.**

## **You can apply SE3R to any form of detail**

- A document.**
- An audio- or video-recording.**
- A ‘live’ interview**
  - face-to-face**
  - on the telephone.**

## Using SE3R you can dominate detail

- You capture detail comprehensively: there is no editing.
- You are able to identify and respond to critical detail:

### ANOMALY

Detail *not disclosed* or *disclosed in an odd way*.

<p>“Thin” account          Missing detail          “Silent” encounters          “One hander” conversation          Gaps          Jumps          “Non-barking dogs”          “Sidestepping”</p>	<p>Vagueness          Ambiguity          “Pat” account          Inconsistency          Contradiction          Narrative contrast          Significant transient change in NVB          Gross or no NV illustrators</p>
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Something, or the way it is said, may sound a “warning bell”, e.g.

- an improbable, impossible or non-sensical action or activity
- a bizarre line of reasoning or explanation.

Such “warning bells” are anomalies.

### AREAS REQUIRING PROBING

Probing = investigation/questioning to obtain further detail, expansion and/or explanation.

- You remember detail without consciously trying to do this.

## SE3R involves new learning ... about the detail within disclosures

### □ Background knowledge

Detail concerning 'discussible topics', e.g.

Individual people	Vehicles
Families	Routines
Groups	Rituals
Entities	Aims
Identities	Objectives
Things	Plans
Objects	Explanations

### □ Narrative detail

Detail concerning activity and circumstances:

EVENTS	EPISODES	CONTINUOUS STATES
Actions	Extended activity,	Circumstances, condition or
Reactions	e.g.	state of affairs,
Responses	<i>I walked down the road.</i>	e.g.
Utterances	<i>When I was driving to</i>	<i>He was unconscious;</i>
Thoughts	<i>London...</i>	<i>There was blood everywhere.</i>
Reasoning	<i>We were arguing all day.</i>	

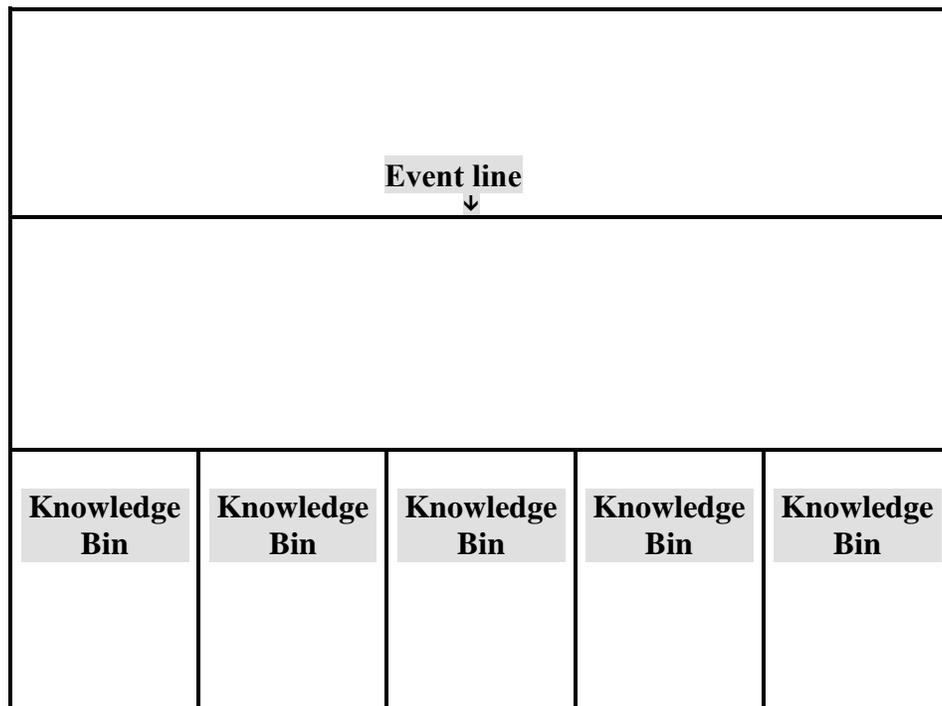
### □ Commentary

Potentially evidentially significant observations:

ABOUT REMEMBERING DETAIL	ABOUT DISCLOSING DETAIL
e.g. <i>I'm not too sure about...</i>	e.g. <i>I'm finding this difficult to say...</i>

## And new learning about...

- Techniques that enable you to maximise capture and grasp of detail.
- Conventions for representing this on SE3R format sheets - which look like this:



## Using SE3R is a skill

- SE3R techniques maximise capture and grasp of detail.
- It takes practice to apply these techniques skilfully and at speed.
- in the early stages:
  - you will need to think that bit harder than conventional note-taking
  - you will take more time applying SE3R than if you had used conventional note-taking

## SE3R always takes a bit longer than conventional note-taking

- The extra time
  - maximises capture, grasp and remembrance of detail
  - reveals all the anomalies and areas for probing.
- A skilled SE3R user does not take much more time than a conventional note-taker.

## Why is it called SE3R?

SE3R is an acronym: the letters and number represent the stages in applying the technique:

**S**URVEY

**E**XTRACT

**R**EAD

**R**EVIEW

**R**ESPOND

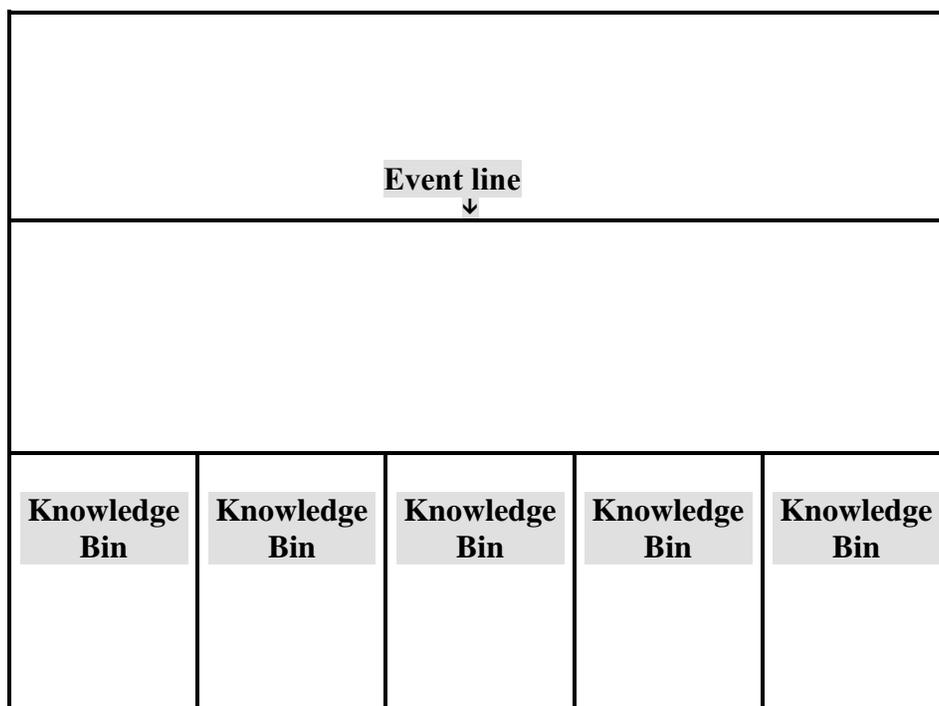
## The materials you need to create an SE3R

### □ **Biros**

- Individual biros with inks of the four industry standard colours: black, blue, red, green.
- 4-colour biros containing black, blue, red, green.
- Each colour has a specific use.

	BLACK	BLUE	RED	GREEN
<b>DOCUMENT</b>	Detail from document			Detail from external sources
<b>INTERVIEW</b>	Spontaneous disclosure	Responses to probing	Responses to checking back and final probing	
<b>COMPOSITE SE3R (2+ COMBINED SE3Rs)</b>	Base source ('anchor') SE3R	Second source SE3R	Third source SE3R	Fourth source SE3R

- **Blank SE3R format sheets or a notepad with pages drawn in SE3R format.**



## SURVEY

- **Essential first stage: NEVER leave it out.**
- **You apply a combination of information-processing techniques that increase:**
  - attention to detail
  - grasp of detail
  - remembrance of detail.

### GET A TOTAL GRASP

- Process ‘straight through’: read/listen to/observe disclosure from ‘beginning to end’.
- DON’T go back to ‘go over again’.
- DON’T attempt to rehearse/commit to memory.

### IMAGE THE DETAIL

- Create a visual image in your “mind’s eye”.
- Create the utterance in you “mind’s ear”.
- Only image the disclosed detail.
- DON’T imagine: imagination involves imaging – adding - detail that is not disclosed.

## SPOT AND “GUGGLE” AT KEY IDEAS

- Speakers vocally stress the key idea.
- “Gugling” = nodding of head with/without acknowledging sound, e.g. *mm*; *uh-huh*.

## “MENTALLY ECHO” DIFFICULT/IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGE DETAIL

- “Mental echoing” = saying the detail silently to yourself.
- Typical examples of “mentally echoed” detail:

names	frequency
relationships	durations
addresses	emotions
times	attitudes
numbers	physical state

## REGULATE THE FLOW OF INFORMATION

- Prevents you being overwhelmed by detail.
- Act as soon as you feel your ‘memory glass’ is full!

DOCUMENT/RECORDING	INTERVIEW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process a ‘chunk’ at a time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the beginning of interview - in ‘Expectations’ stage – explain that you will regulate the flow of detail, e.g. <i>I may need to stop you from time to time to get my head around the detail you’re telling me.</i></li> <li>• Regulate the flow across the interview</li> </ul>

## EXTRACT

You comprehensively capture the detail.

- Read/listen to/observe again the unfolding detail – regulating the flow.
- Identify and enter the three different types of detail in the appropriate area of the SE3R sheet.

### Background knowledge

→ Knowledge bins [KBs]

KB = sum total of detail disclosed on the ‘discussible topic’.

### Narrative detail (events, episodes, continuous states)

→ Event line

### Commentary

→ Adjacent to the detail or the point commentary occurs.

- Annotate as you go along:
  - anomalies
  - areas for probing (expansion; explanation)
  - areas for investigation/checking.

**THE OUTCOME: An SE3R!**

## READ

You check the accuracy and your grasp of the detail in your SE3R.

**First**

- Read all the KBs.
- Amend as necessary.

**Then**

- Read Event Line detail.
- Amending as necessary.

**THE OUTCOME: A secure remembrance of comprehensively captured detail!**

## REVIEW

You analyse the detail in your SE3R and use this to plan your next steps.

- Identify and annotate:
  - Anomalies
  - Areas for probing (expansion; explanation)
  - Areas for investigation/checking.
  
- As applicable use your annotations to create an *action plan*, e.g.
  - **Wants Analysis**: list of investigative actions
  - **Interview plan**: themes/topics for probing.

## RESPOND

You turn your analysis into action.

□ **If you are working from a document/recording**

- implement your Wants Analysis, i.e. conduct/task further investigation/investigative interviewing
- create a composite SE3R [=combination of individual SE3Rs].
- plan and prepare for a forthcoming interview.

□ **If in an interview**

Respond appropriately to:

- annotated anomalies
- areas needing expansion or explanation.

Common anomalies that occur during probing include:

Answering a question with a question  
 “Diverting” (directing you to put the question to someone else)  
 “Sabotaging” (arguing; abuse; threatening)

Measured disclosure (minimal disclosure of detail)  
 “Blanking” an echo probe  
 “Pat” responses

## Recommended reading

Shepherd, E. (2007) *Investigative Interviewing: the Conversation Management approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shepherd, E. (2011) *SE3R: a Resource Book. Fourth Edition*. East Hendred: Forensic Solutions.

Shepherd, E. and Mortimer, A. (1999) Identifying anomaly in evidential texts. In A. Heaton-Armstrong, E. Shepherd and D. Wolchover, (Eds.) *Analysing Witness Testimony: a guide for legal practitioners and other professionals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.