This research paper discusses the role of virtual environments in digital forensic investigations. With virtual environments becoming more prevalent as an analysis tool in digital forensic investigations, it's becoming more important for digital forensic investigators to understand the limitations and strengths of virtual machines. The study aims to expose limitations within commercial closed source virtual machines and open source virtual machines. The study provides a brief overview of history of virtual environments, and concludes with an experiment with four common open and closed source virtual machines; the effects of the virtual machines on the host machine as well as the performance of the virtual machine itself.

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The public is welcome to attend.