
Editorial

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Biographical note: Denis Edgar-Nevill is a Head of the Department of Computing at Canterbury Christ Church University. His research has included 170 publications and UK and EU-funded research projects. He has been elected a Member of professional bodies including the Engineering Council as a Chartered Engineer, UK Academy for Information Systems, Chartered IT Professional and a Fellow of the British Computer Society FBCS and BCS Elite Member. In 2002, he developed an MSc in Cybercrime Forensics validated jointly with the NPIA. He chairs the Annual International CFET conferences and was elected founding chair of the National BCS Cybercrime Forensics Specialist Group.

1 Introduction

This special issue of the journal includes selected papers from the second International Conference on Cybercrime Forensics Education and Training (CFET, 2008) held at Canterbury Christ Church University in Kent in the UK on 1 and 2 September 2008. The objective of CFET 2008 was to bring together papers, practical workshop proposals, poster presentations across a wide range of computer forensics areas:

- Hacking detection and prevention.
- Viruses and antivirus software.
- Police, commercial and university training in cybercrime forensics.
- Supporting police investigations.
- Ethical, professional and legal issues.
- New software tools for cybercrime forensics.
- International cooperation to develop standards.
- Career pathways in cybercrime forensics.
- Network and mobile communication technologies.
- Case studies in cybercrime forensics.

The participants included representation from 15 countries and from across a wide spectrum of groups:

- Police forces (police officers, training organisations, high-tech crime units)
- Commercial practitioners (computer security companies, legal services, risk management, forensic software tool vendors)
- Educational trainers (researchers, lecturers, research students, masters' students).

2 The development of cybercrime forensics

The need for cybercrime forensics as a new discipline has followed the growth of the application of computers in business, education and the home. As information systems have become more complex, law enforcement agencies have required techniques to reconstruct information and gather details of transactions to prove crime; to the exacting standards required to support successful prosecution of offenders. The creation of the world-wide web and its explosive growth across the World has revealed new kinds of criminal activity and the limitations of law enforcement agencies to deal with them.

On 23rd November 2001, the Council of Europe published its *Convention on Cybercrime* (EU, 2001) which recognises the urgent and immediate attention which must be given to the dramatic growth in global information systems to protect individual freedom and the increasing development of e-commerce and trade between organisations across the member states and with non-EU countries.

The European Information Society Group published in 2004 a third discussion paper as part of the IPPR E-Crime Study drafted by UK MPs (EURIM, 2004). In this discussion paper, the following point is made:

“We have around 140,000 police officers in the UK. Barely 1000 have been trained to handle digital evidence at the basic level and fewer than 250 of them are currently with Computer Crime Units or have higher-level forensic skills.”

This lack of expertise nationally is still considered to be a ‘crisis’ and developments over the last 20 years were considered at CFET 2008 by Professor Nigel Jones MBE and included in these selected papers. As well as the need for police officers and Home Office officials to have the necessary background skill sets to preserve and interpret digital evidence there is a wider range of more than 8,000 investigators working in the private sector in the UK who would benefit from gaining recognition of their skills by completing formal qualifications in this area.

European Union funded AGIS programme has made advances in creating new international standards for forensic data collection and training (AGIS, 2003). A number of universities in the UK have begun MSc programmes to provide specialist training some working in collaboration with police and other governmental bodies. Early examples of these in the UK include Cranfield University in 2002 – working with Customs and Excise (Cranfield, 2008) and Canterbury Christ Church University in 2003 (CCCU, 2008) – working with the NPIA (National Policing Improvement Agency) (NPIA, 2008). These have been followed by a range of other postgraduate and undergraduate programmes providing career opportunities in cybercrime forensics.

3 Current developments

On Monday 15th December 2008, the British Computer Society (BCS) established a new national Cybercrime Forensics Specialist Group (SG) (BCS, 2008). The invitation to put forward a proposal to the BCS to form this new national SG came as a result of the CFET 2008 conference. The BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG has already accepted invitations to get involved in a range of new developments by national and international bodies. The NPIA has invited the SG to participate in a proposed review of the national ACPO standards in this area and has also been invited to collaborate with EU and Europol working groups in cybercrime forensics. There have been important recent developments in the UK in this area has been the creation of new Police Central e-crime Unit (PCeU, 2008) based within the Metropolitan Police Service (MET, 2008) and supporting the new National Fraud Reporting Centre (Heath, 2008) when it comes into operation in 2009.

There is recognition of the urgent need for investment, consolidation, updating and training across many organisations.

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