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UNH Partners With Attorney General’s Office To Combat Cyber Crime

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DURHAM, N.H. – Justiceworks at the University of New Hampshire is the new home for a nationally recognized research team from Dartmouth and a $400,000 grant from the New Hampshire Attorney General’s Office.

The Technical Analysis Group (TAG) — Assistant Research Professor Andrew Macpherson and his two project directors Stacy Kollias and Kevin O’Shea — transitioned from the Institute for Security Technology Studies at Dartmouth College last month. They will work with the interdisciplinary teams that form the nucleus of the social and behavioral sciences in the Justiceworks research program. Justiceworks is leading the effort to provide law enforcement agencies with the research they need to take advantage of and understand the implications of using new technology in communications, engineering, emergency response, and munitions.

With the addition of Macpherson and his team, Justiceworks will support the strategic plan to combat cyber crime developed by the AG’s office and its statewide law enforcement partners. TAG’s work will include surveying the existing investigative capabilities in the state and cataloging the expertise that does exist.

“The prevention, investigation and prosecution of cyber crimes is a top priority for the state of New Hampshire,” Attorney General Kelly Ayotte said. “The borderless nature of cyber crime, its potential effect on Homeland Security and the challenges it poses for law enforcement agencies lacking the resources and expertise to stay on top of the constantly changing technology all make it imperative that the state play a leading role in dealing with cyber crimes, and bringing together resources like Justiceworks and the Technical Advisory Group is the first step.”

“This is a critical partnership for UNH,” said John Kirkpatrick, director of Justiceworks. “The AG’s office is leading the broad partnership that is addressing cyber crime and homeland security issues. We’ve been intensely interested in the relationship of technology to the justice system and this grant will bring the research of social and behavioral scientists together with engineers and computer scientists. Together, we will help the state build sustainable investigative, forensics, and prosecutorial capabilities.”

Cyber crime poses a daunting set of problems. Experts believe that no single entity in the state of New Hampshire could ever have all the resources to combat cyber crime thus long term it will be a regional, as well as national, effort. Macpherson notes that New Hampshire is taking on cyber crime systematically.
“So many states have taken an ad hoc approach to combating cyber crime,” Macpherson said. “Under the leadership of Attorney General Ayotte we have a window of opportunity to build sustainable partnerships.” Macpherson was recently appointed to the State of Wisconsin Governor’s Counsel on Homeland Security’s Cyber Terrorism Advisory Board and serves as an advisor to the federal Department of Homeland Security.

“Cyber crime is going to be one of the most prevalent issues of the next 50 years,” Macpherson said. “This new partnership is an example of one of the best ways to combat it, by bringing together the cutting-edge research that is taking place at academic institutions like UNH and the agencies responsible for tracking down criminals.”