BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG

Discussion Document

2Centre – Proposed UK Structure

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September 2009
Overview

On 7th May 2009 Denis Edgar-Nevill attended a 2Centre project meeting in Brussels representing, in part, the BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG. The meeting discussed the proposed 2Centre project proposal and the intended formation of centres of excellence in Cybercrime Forensics across the EU based around offering a standardized MSc provision with each centre bringing together a university partnered with law enforcement.

The development was discussed at the last SG committee meeting as part of a report by Professor Nigel Jones MBE on the report announced and published at the Council of Europe Octopus 2009 Conference in Strasbourg (ref http://www.2centre.eu/docs).

The initial project will involve two centres of excellence (UCD in Republic of Ireland and Université de Technologie de Troyes in France) with the initial phase of development being to clarify exactly what should constitute such an entity and the process a new centre should go through to be recognised in this way. Clearly there would be advantages in having direct access to training materials and expertise. The project is very well supported by the EU and looks very likely to be funded.

One of the initial problems the 2Centre team has had in putting forward this development is the rush of potential partners asking how one becomes a centre of excellence (which will not really be known until the project is underway). Expressions of support have been made to the team – and support from the BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG’s has been indicated as discussed and agreed at the committee meeting at the University of Greenwich 23rd March 2009.

One worrying point raised at the 2Centre meeting was the suggestion that each EU country might be represented by one or, at most, two centres of excellence. This was the subject of some discussion by the university representatives at the meeting. In the UK there are more than 50 universities running computer forensics courses and at least half a dozen who could quite rightly make claims to the ‘centre of excellence’ title based upon their staff expertise, investment in infrastructure and associations with industry and law enforcement agencies. For small EU countries a single focus would seem to make sense (and indeed there was a presentation from Estonia on their proposed 2Centre Centre of Excellence at the meeting in Brussels). The possibility of the UK being represented by only one or two centres of excellence would almost certainly be divisive. Clearly there is the need to strike a balance between a single elitist centre being recognised and a proliferation of single university based centres which might easily lose the ability to present a national perspective on any issue.

With the goal of forming a more inclusive structure, this document suggests the creation of regional centres of excellence in the UK with a major role for the BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG as a unifying focus; based upon its wide spectrum of representation across the commercial security & forensic, academic & law enforcement sectors.
Proposal

The proposal is that in the UK a two level structure (figure 1) is established with the BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG acting as a coordinating focus:

**National Focus** – The British Computer Society (BCS) Cybercrime Forensics Specialist Group (SG) act as a coordinating body to support the development and operation of a number of regional centres of excellence. The BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG has representation across a range of UK universities, national and international commercial companies, local and national police bodies making it an ideal partner to support the development of cybercrime forensics in regional centres.

**Regional Centres of Excellence** – these would be led by a university partner and follow the expected make up of a 2Centre of Excellence in supporting the necessary infrastructure and expertise to deliver high-level training, research and development:

- **University** – one university partner would lead a regional 2Centre of Excellence which must meet the minimum level of expected infrastructure to support this role; staff, equipment, software etc
- **University Partner** – the led university in a regional 2Centre of Excellence would be encouraged to form associations with other universities in the same region for joint discussion, research and development;
- **Law Enforcement** – all regional 2Centres of Excellence will have strong links at either a national or regional police force levels;
- **Commercial Partners** – all regional 2Centres of Excellence will have a group of commercial company links in their organisation and management structures;
- **Professional Body** – the national BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG would play an active role in the development and operation of the regional group.

Notes

1. New regional centres of excellence would be required to go through any 2Centre processes for development and accreditation with the BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG acting as a supporting partner to the regional grouping;

2. Eventually regional centres across England might include South East, North West, North East, South West, Midlands with single centres representing Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland but it is anticipated this will take some time to achieve;

3. The university leading each regional centre should have in place and be offering the necessary infrastructure to deliver the standard MSc provision;

4. University Partners would be encouraged to form partnerships with other regional universities to develop networks for joint development and discussion;
5. Regional centres of excellence would act as self-managing/organising entities with the BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG playing a coordination and dissemination role to ensure a national focus exists and is represented;

6. All regional centres should be represented on the BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG 2Centre subcommittee to take forward 2Centre developments and reporting;

7. The BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG will act as the coordinating body for regional centre supporting accreditation and review on behalf of the wider 2Centre project structure;

8. The BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG will act as a forum for national discussions and a platform for international dissemination though the international CFET conference;

9. The intention is that the national BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG act as a facilitator and support for regional groups rather than having a hierarchical management role;

10. Course materials developed across the 2Centre project will be available to regional centres to incorporate in programme provision and there is an expectation that this will be a two-way process as regional centres develop their own case-studies and module materials;

11. It is not anticipated that regional centres will be uniform in structure or expertise. It is anticipated that centres may develop particular areas of interest in niche areas of cybercrime forensics and become specific points of reference for the whole 2Centre community;

12. This document has been written at a time just after the 2Centre bid has been submitted to the EU Commission for consideration (31st July 2009) and it has received considerable support from them in its preparation. The 2Centre project will not, however, receive funding before 2010. The intention of this document is to help develop the ground-work in the UK to ensure that there are fledgling regional communities ready to take advantage of the 2Centre framework as it develops and make practical use of the 2Centre materials and products as they are developed in the early days of the project. To some extent developing these groups is speculative but necessary to put ourselves in position to take full advantage of the opportunities that the project presents. Please fill in and return the expressions of interest form (last page of this document) if you would like to take part in future discussions on this project.
UK Structure
The proposed UK structure is given in figure 1 below. The role of the BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG is to act as a facilitation to regional groups providing coordination nationally for this EU-wide project. As discussed in the notes above, the specific structure for any group will depend on the nature of the partner groups formed and any particular specialty which may be developed. The anticipation is that the basic components of university focus (whether a single or group), law enforcement (regional force(s), national body or other agency) and commercial organisations will exist within the structure. It is hoped that the involvement of a national professional body will also enhance the grouping allowing for a closer cooperation between regional groups across the UK.

Figure 1 Proposed UK 2Centres of Excellence Structure
Developmental Roadmap for the Next Year

September 2009 - CFET 2009/ BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG Committee
2Centre project was discussed and a subcommittee formed. The need to develop the discussion document agreed leading to the creation of this document.

October 2009 - Dissemination of Proposal Document
Circulation of this discussion document to all UK universities for consideration and response.

Deadline for the receipt of expressions of interest from individual or more substantive groupings. Over the period any questions and advice can be passed to the BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG who will liaise with the 2Centre project. In addition the SG will assist in putting interested parties in contact (if requested) to assist in regional groupings being formed.

January/February 2009 – Meeting of Organisations Expressing Interested in the Development
The intention is for the BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG to facilitate a national meeting in London or the Midlands as a discussion forum for interested parties. More details on the 2Centre project will be available together with an update on the project’s development to date. The objective of this meeting is to provide clarification and allow for a wide-ranging discussion on the way forward including the development of a national bid for EU funding. It will be a useful opportunity for networking and building new links to strengthen groupings.

March to August 2010 – Regional Centres Preparation
During this phase the expectation is that fledgling Regional Centres will confirm interest to participate in the development within members of their grouping. They will audit the current education/training courses provided, expertise within the group (developing CVs, registers of expertise, events etc) and begin preparations for more formal submissions to the 2Centre project.

September 2010 – CFET 2010 UK 2Centre Report
Formal report discussed as a presentation at the international conference to be submitted to 2Centre as a UK-wide consultation document.

Denis Edgar-Nevill
Chair, BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG 14th September 2009
Expression of Interest Form

CONTACT DETAILS

Name

Organisation

Address

Telephone

Fax

Email

TYPE OF ORGANISATION

University

Law Enforcement

Commercial

Other Organisations Worked With in Cybercrime Forensics (if any)

Organisation

Organisation

Organisation

Organisation

Organisation

INTERESTED IN

Forming the focus/leading a UK Regional 2Centre Centre of Excellence

Being a partner in a UK Regional 2Centre Centre of Excellence

Attending the Expressions of Interest Forum Meeting in Feb/March 2010

Being added to the mailing list for the development

Becoming a new member of the BCS Cybercrime Forensics SG

RETURN THIS FORM

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