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Abu Dhabi to host global meet on digital forensics

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ABU DHABI — Digital forensics is increasingly playing a critical role in solving crimes as many criminals resort to using the Internet and digital devices in perpetrating their illegal acts.

"Almost every crime that you can think of has some sort of digital evidence in it at this point," said Dr Ibrahim Bagilli, assistant professor and director of the Advanced Cyber Forensics Research at Zayed University.

While announcing the launch of the second International ICST (Institute for Computer Sciences, Social Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering) Conference on Digital Forensics and Cyber Crime (ICDF2C) next month, Dr Bagilli, chairperson of the conference, explained how digital forensics help in law enforcement, network security and information assurance.

"Let's say you want to shoot someone, you search for a gun (online) and when we get your computer, we can relate that to the crime," he said.

The ICDF2C, which will be hosted for the first time in the Middle East region in Abu Dhabi from October 4 to 6, will highlight pertinent issues including financial crimes, digital forensic process, training and education, law, multimedia forensics, forensic standardisation and accreditation, cyber crime investigations, cyber criminal psychology, cyber terrorism and software piracy investigations.

According to Dr Bagilli, some of the challenges in the field that will be discussed at the conference are related to network forensics or how to find digital evidence on a network in a legally and scientifically sound manner, how to extract required data quickly from a large volume, the cross-jurisdictional or the legal aspect of the crime, and certification, education and standardisation.

"One of the problems in this field is that it's bleeding edge – something that is so new that it has faults in it.

"The technology is not mature yet in other areas like cell phone forensics and small scale digital device forensics as they're proprietary in nature," Dr Bagilli said.

"We hope that by bringing in the international community we can get a bigger perspective on some of these larger issues," he added.

Key speakers at the conference include Paul B. Kurtz, a cyber and homeland security expert who served in senior positions on the White House's National Security and Homeland Security Councils under US Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

Bob Chandler, head of the Fraud Investigation and Dispute Services at Ernst&Young underscored the importance of knowing the latest developments in technology in fraud investigation.

"Given the use of technology in business ... more and more frequently, key evidence is buried somewhere in vast volumes of data. Thus, it becomes critical to be able to find it using processes that maintain its integrity," he said.

Zayed University will host the conference in partnership with the Ministry of Interior and Ernst&Young. The conference was first held in New York last year.

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