



Drakontas LLC
ACIN Technology Center
200 Federal Street, Suite #300
Camden, NJ 08103

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www.drakontas.com

Contact: Michael J. Mitkus

Phone: (267) 415-4768

mmitkus@drakontas.com

**Drakontas Receives Grant to Establish Research and Training Program
to Investigate and Prevent Crimes in Virtual Communities and Gaming Worlds**

Through a Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance, Drakontas will partner with Drexel University to develop a comprehensive training program and online information clearinghouse on virtual crimes and response strategies for law enforcement practitioners

CAMDEN, NJ– Drakontas LLC, a software company that develops situation awareness and information management tools for first responders, law enforcement and homeland defense, today announced that it had been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance to develop a training program for the law enforcement community to better understand virtual crime and methods to prevent it.

“As virtual worlds, such as Second Life, grow in popularity, crimes – from money laundering to gambling to sexual misconduct – within these communities are also becoming more widespread, making law enforcement’s job more difficult,” said Dr. Brian Regli, CEO of Drakontas LLC. “Without continued training in this space, law enforcement professionals can quickly fall behind criminals in their knowledge of computer technologies and services and how they can be exploited for illegal purposes. The Bureau of Justice Assistance has asked us to research the issue and share our findings, namely the nature of these crimes and the methods for preventing them, with the law enforcement practitioner community.”

As part of the work to be conducted under this project, Drakontas and Drexel, through its Criminal Justice Program, will conduct seminars across the country to train law enforcement practitioners on the techniques for seizing gaming consoles and related networking equipment, the threats and vulnerabilities to users of virtual and gaming worlds, and the use of virtual and gaming worlds as a tool to investigate and prevent crime.

“Gone are the days where the functionality of gaming consoles is limited to just playing games,” said Dr. Rob D’Ovidio, assistant professor of criminal justice at Drexel. “Gaming consoles have become media hubs for the household with on-board storage, web browsing, social networking, and communication capabilities. As such, they provide new opportunities for crime and can be a valuable investigative tool. It is, thus, incumbent upon the law enforcement community to keep the educational background of investigators current with the evolving nature of gaming technologies and services.”

The project team will also develop an online information clearinghouse of materials related to the training sessions and research findings on this emerging issue. The project will conclude with a one-day conference on crime and victimization in virtual communities for executives from the gaming industry and law enforcement community.

About Drakontas LLC

Drakontas (www.drakontas.com), headquartered in Camden, New Jersey, develops, evaluates and promotes interoperable communications solutions that increase the safety and operational efficiency of law enforcement, emergency response, and security personnel. The company was founded in partnership with Drexel University in 2004 to transition technologies developed at the Applied Communications and Information Networking (ACIN) Center for the Department of Defense to commercial, civilian and homeland security uses.

In addition to providing situation awareness solutions, Drakontas administers the NLECTC Communications Technologies Center of Excellence through a cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs' National Institute of Justice. The Center of Excellence, whose purpose is to test, evaluate and demonstrate cutting edge communications tools and technologies, manages a wide range of criminal justice pilot projects involving software defined and cognitive radios, position location technologies, wireless data interoperability, and other communications tools and capabilities.

About Drexel University

Drexel University (www.drexel.edu) is a nationally ranked private institution located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It has received a Carnegie Foundation ranking of doctoral granting university with high research activity. Drexel has positioned itself as a leader in the fields of electronic crime and digital forensics research and education. Its research and educational activities in these areas have addressed technical, behavioral, and legal issues related to electronic fraud, seizing cell phones, computer-facilitated sexual exploitation of children, terrorism, online harassment, intellectual property theft, network intrusions, and techniques to hide criminal activity in cyberspace. Drexel has received funding from the National Institute of Justice, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Defense to support this work. The university continues to support the law enforcement community by providing consultation to agencies on computer technologies encountered during investigations and through workforce development courses on electronic crime investigative techniques.

About the Bureau of Justice Assistance

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime. BJA supports law enforcement, courts, corrections, treatment, victim services, technology, and prevention initiatives that strengthen the nation's criminal justice system.

BJA has three primary components: Policy, Programs, and Planning. The Policy Office provides national leadership in criminal justice policy, training, and technical assistance to further the administration of justice. It also acts as a liaison to national organizations that partner with BJA to set policy and help disseminate information on best and promising practices. The Programs Office coordinates and administers all state and local grant programs and acts as BJA's direct line of communication to states, territories, and tribal governments by providing assistance and coordinating resources. The Planning Office coordinates the planning, communications, and budget formulation and execution; provides overall BJA-wide coordination; and supports streamlining efforts.

For more information, visit <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA>

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