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## Email bullying, online fraud, electronic identity theft: guard against cyber crime with new course

If a malicious employee stole data from your organisation, would you have the skills to detect it? Could you gather evidence that would help the authorities prosecute a criminal case? Would you be able to produce the evidence to handle a disputed transaction, or a misbehaving employee? In this digital age we live in, computing security and business IT processes are under more scrutiny and pressure than ever before.

A new postgraduate course from The Open University is now available to equip professionals with a basic understanding of this complex field. Computer Forensics and Investigations provides an introduction to the world of digital evidence collection, forensic computing and IT incident management. The course will enable people to know what to do in the first initial stages of investigation - being a 'First Responder' to a situation and helping an organisation prepare for problems before they happen.

Carefully constructed to balance the legal and technical aspects of this area, the course is relevant to IT professionals wishing to broaden their skill set, human resources managers who need to understand the issues and legal professionals seeking a new challenge. Specially commissioned material has been written by a legal and technical expert in the field, Peter Sommer, who has acted as an expert witness in high-profile cases ranging from terrorism and fraud, Internet child abuse and international hacking to corporate espionage, defamation and murder. Peter also has had experience in Westminster and Whitehall as a specialist advisor.

Peter Sommer said: "IT related crimes are more prolific and businesses have to guard themselves against a multitude of issues: fraud, illegal downloads, theft of data and online bullying, for instance. Cyber crime is

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a major issue: in addition to the spectacular events that capture media attention, most businesses are likely, over a 12-month period, to suffer from incidents where digital investigation and evidence are required, for example, disputed transactions, employee disputes, minor frauds and attacks. Some universities offer courses to produce forensic technicians and analysts - but there is a huge need to support the 'first responder' as it is at this point that much useful information is lost, or even inadvertently destroyed."

Students on the course will learn the essentials behind identifying, acquiring, preserving and analysing evidence and gain an overview of relevant law. They will use authentic computer forensic tools during investigations of specially prepared scenarios that replicate real-life situations, developed with input from digital forensic consultancy Evidence Talks Ltd.

Course Team Chair Blaine Price said: "An understanding of the basics of computer forensics is becoming more and more important for a wide range of professionals. But in contrast to the high-profile media representations of the subject on TV shows like CSI and Spooks, this course is not aimed just at 'techies' - it also teaches skills important for managers and those with legal interests at companies of just about any size."

This course will give a good grounding in forensic computing and equip students for further study. It is a 15-point postgraduate level course which can be used towards a postgraduate qualification. The first presentation of the course starts in May 2008, with registration closing at the end of March. The course will run again in November 2008.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors:

The following are examples of typical corporate situations where digital investigations are required:

- An employee complains that another employee is harassing him/her sexually via emails
- Law enforcement approaches the company saying it has suspicions about an employee and seek assistance
- A dispute arises with a customer and it is important to determine exactly what happened

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- A rival business appears to be using information which could only have come from your company; you need to determine the mechanism and identify the miscreant
- Your computer system keeps on crashing - is the fault of a software supplier, a rogue employee, or external hackers?

## Web

Forensic computing Type in Forensic Computing at

[www.open.ac.uk/courses](http://www.open.ac.uk/courses)

Evidence Talks <http://www.evidencetalks.com/index.html>

Peter Sommer <http://www.pmsommer.com>

### About Evidence Talks Ltd

Evidence Talks Ltd is one of the world's leading forensic computing consultancies.

A veteran of thousands of digital investigations into everything from fraud and espionage to intellectual property theft and child abuse images, the company has acted for businesses, financial institutions, governments, police forces and security agencies across the globe. Staff are regularly called on to appear in court as expert witnesses.

Managing director and principal consultant Andrew Sheldon is one of the few people to hold a Masters Degree in forensic computing. A module developer, lecturer and member of the management committee at the Royal Military College of Science at Cranfield University, he is a regular key speaker at domestic and international conferences.

### About The Open University

The Open University (OU) is the United Kingdom's only university dedicated to distance learning. It has about 150,000 undergraduate and more than 30,000 postgraduate students. Nearly all students are studying part-time. The University itself is ranked among the top UK universities for the quality of its teaching. A third of the University's UK undergraduate students have entry qualifications lower than those normally demanded by other UK universities.

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