

The Global Prosecutors E-Crime Network (GPEN) - Enabling an International, Knowledge Led, Coordinated Approach to Prosecuting Cybercrime.

How GPEN developed

The origins of the GPEN initiative lie in the United Kingdom's developing strategy to combat cybercrime.

For more than a decade, like other prosecutors, practitioners in the UK have had to face the growing incidence of cases where computers or other devices have been used as a crime tool. For example, the distribution of child abuse images, cases where computers are the target of crime by hacking, and where they or other devices have been used as storage and communication tools to facilitate the commission of offences, such as drug dealing.

In 2000 in the UK the Home Office and law enforcement agencies began to put dedicated resources into tackling cybercrime. One of the key aims was to develop a national cybercrime strategy. The strategy would establish a national specialist unit (now part of the National Crime Agency) and ensure that all regional police constabularies had specialist investigators in place.

These developments were mirrored by prosecutors in the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) who developed their own complementary strategy to ensure that there was sufficient specialist expertise and general awareness to effectively prosecute cybercrime cases. This involved developing a cadre of specialists capable of advising their in-house colleagues and law enforcement agencies.

The first CPS cybercrime course was held in November 2002 and since that time more than 200+ prosecutors have been trained. The CPS developed a range of online cybercrime training modules.

The GPEN and the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP)

GPEN was designed to be a solution to cybercrime problems that Esther George noticed that UK prosecutors were experiencing.

Anxious to share and also learn from others the CPS which is an IAP organisational member, approached the IAP with a view to establishing a global network of cybercrime specialists.

The IAP is the only world wide association of prosecutors and has been in existence for over 12 years. It is a non- governmental, non-political organisation. The need to establish such an organisation was required by the rapid growth in transnational crime and thus the

IAP was established in June 1995 at the United Nations offices in Vienna. The IAP numbers 2,600 individual members and 165 organisational members representing more than 300,000 prosecutors. Organisational and individual membership of the IAP gives access to numerous benefits including: membership of a global network, receipt of a quarterly IAP newsletter which contains reports of IAP activities, announcements and articles of interest to the global prosecutor and access to the members only areas of the IAP websites which includes GPEN and contact points in other countries which can prove to be essential when dealing with cross border criminality.

The IAP websites includes:

- Access to Global Prosecutors E-Crime Network (GPEN) training materials and contacts
- Access to the Network of Anti-Corruption Prosecutors (NACP)
- Access to the Forum for International Criminal Justice (FICJ) and contacts
- Access to the Trafficking in Persons Platform (TIPP) and contacts
- Access to the Counter Terrorism Prosecutors Network (CTPN) and contacts
- Access to the Prosecuting of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (PSV) and contacts
- Access to the Network for Military Prosecutors (NMP)

The IAP is based in The Hague and holds consultative status with The UN Social and Economic Council and works with the United Nations Office of Crime and Drugs (UNODC) which is based in Vienna. The IAP web site <http://www.iap-association.org> includes information of relevance to prosecutors with an interest in cross jurisdictional matters.

The IAP holds Annual Conferences on topical themes as well as Regional Conferences with more of a training element for frontline prosecutors.

GPEN was launched as an IAP initiative at the IAP's 13th Annual Conference in Singapore in 2008. The theme of that conference was 'New Technologies in Crime and Prosecution: Challenges and Opportunities' with an emphasis on cybercrime.

It was agreed at that conference that GPEN would in the area of cybercrime be the IAP's main vehicle to promote training, heighten awareness, spread good practice and link with industry.

The GPEN and you

GPEN has been designed so that it can achieve the following:

- enhance international cooperation in the cybercrime arena of member countries;
- reduce duplication of training and realise significant cost savings as countries will no longer need to devise their own training material from scratch;
- develop appropriate training courses to train prosecutors who will be able to train their colleagues;
- encourage the sharing of best practice and dissemination of lessons learnt;
- improve the exchange of crucial information and data quickly and efficiently, and;
- encourage all jurisdictions to develop a co-ordinated approach for dealing with e-crime that supports effective prosecutions.

The GPEN website is managed by the GPEN Committee composed of four IAP members. There are security restrictions to the network to ensure that the material available to members is not open to misuse by criminals. All material listed on the GPEN is free for use by members.

Each IAP member country has been invited to nominate at least one prosecutor (preferably with a knowledge of e-crime) to be registered with the GPEN as a contact point for that country for enquiries, and requests for cybercrime advice.

The GPEN Website

The home page is open to the public and welcomes you to the web site.

There is then an “about GPEN” page which explains the aim of GPEN, why it exists and the benefits of the network.

There is also a partners page as GPEN will act as a conduit between prosecutors and industry by participating in industry networks, inviting industry to contribute to horizon-scanning exercises to assess future challenges and opportunities; and encourage cross-training involving Industry.

There are then four areas that can only be accessed by members using a password, these are:

- a virtual GPEN Learning Centre which contains a database of e-crime training courses and presentations.
- a library which has a collection of e-crime material, for example, national legislation and legal guidance;
- a discussion forum (message/chat board) for the exchange of queries and advice;
- a contacts database of fellow nominated e-crime prosecutors from around the world.

The GPEN also hosts monthly webinars on e-crime topics and sends out to members a monthly newsletter. Prosecutors play an important role in the criminal justice system and they need to be trained to prosecute cybercrime cases and the use of electronic evidence. In order to enable the delivery of such training globally in a cost effective and sustainable manner GPEN supports and encourages regional cybercrime capacity building and has jointly organised and co-sponsored a number of regional training events.

The GPEN speeds up safe communication between specialists, enabling prosecutors to share best practice, knowledge and training, thereby raising standards and the chances of successfully prosecuting cybercrime across continents.

For further information about GPEN - <http://www.iap-association.org/GPEN/Home.aspx>

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