Contents of this Month's Update

From the Science Committee


From the CINA Center for Analysis.

Detecting terrorist threats, whether it be federal or private, is a critical task for law enforcement agencies. To help address this challenge, the CINA Center for Analysis derived an innovative approach for modeling terrorism hot spots within large urban areas, especially in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area.

Understanding Crime Hot Spots

Crime hot spots are defined as areas within a city where crime occurs more frequently than in other parts of the city. These hot spots can have a dramatic impact on city-level crime trends, so it is very important to understand what makes them so concentrated in specific neighborhoods. Changes in these crime hot spots can account for correlations between place and crime.

Source Data and Predictive Modeling

In order to identify crime hot spots, the CINA Center for Analysis uses a combination of methodologies, including data mining, predictive modeling, and open source information. A group of George Mason University students, working both independently and on a project team, was able to successfully meet the challenge.

In partnership with CINA and OSPP, the CINA Scholars researched and developed a new methodology for using open-source data, particularly cell phone data, to predict and analyze crime trends. The scholars were thankful for the DHS guidance they received to successfully meet the challenge.

OSPP supervisor, Jason Ackleson offered high praise stating the enthusiasm, engagement, and most importantly, research-based findings helped our team to better understand how we can continue to be safer.

George Mason University students, working both independently and on a project team, were able to successfully meet the challenge.

Using only unclassified, open-source data, George Mason University students, working both independently and on a project team, were able to successfully meet the challenge.

The summer project focus was to protect the community and its privacy rights. Both CINA and OSPP have been instrumental in the education, training, and continuing development of analysts within the Intelligence Community. As such, we were particularly proud to host these scholars.

Suarez explained, "It was actually finding the specific data they needed--which was not easy to get from the public--that was the biggest challenge.

Their enthusiasm, engagement, and most importantly, research-based findings helped our team to better understand how we can continue to be safer.

As part of the project, the students were able to successfully mine open-source data and present those findings through discussions with our DHS team.

The Center on Illicit Networks and Transnational Organized Crime who will speak about the importance of successfully meeting the challenge.

The "their enthusiasm, engagement, and most importantly, research-based findings helped our team to better understand how we can continue to be safer.

"These researchers are a valuable addition to the wealth of talent and energy in MSI institutions across the country."