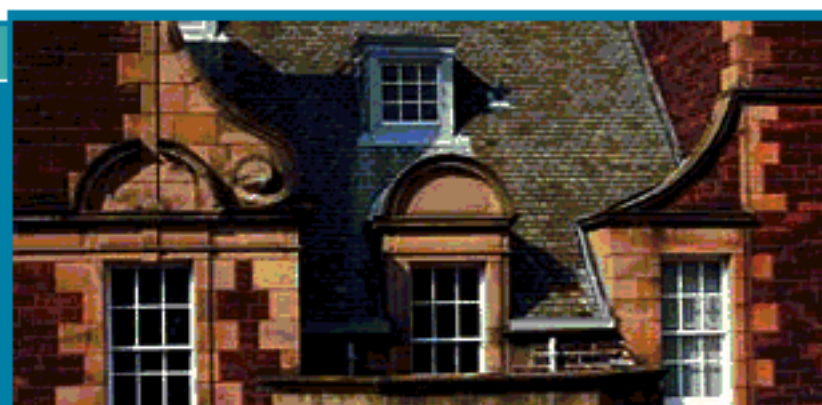


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Graduate Could Help Close Net to Terror

18 November 2004

An award-winning computing whiz whose research into hidden Internet communications could help fight terrorism, has graduated from Napier University.

David Llamas (37) graduated with a 2:1 BSc Honours Degree in Software Technology at a ceremony in the Festival Theatre, Edinburgh.

In September, David won the £1,000 second prize in the ScotlandIS Young Software Engineer of the Year Awards for his research into detecting hidden communications that terrorists could send to each other over the Internet.

His project – Covert Channels Analysis and Data Hiding in the TCP/IP protocol suite – has demonstrated that terrorists and criminals can breach security measures and send messages hidden within seemingly innocent data communications that cannot be detected by the UK's intelligence agencies.

David's research is a major step forward in creating a system which could detect these hidden messages which would be a huge boon to the global fight against terrorism.

His project has led to two further research applications by Napier and work with the Police Information Technology Office which is responsible for developing systems which enhance the detection of crime in the UK.

David said: "After three years of hard studying all my efforts have paid off. It feels great to be graduating but I will never forget my experiences at Napier University and what I have learned there.

"I am now looking at continuing to study this subject by initiating PhD research into Covert Channels and Steganography".

Dr Bill Buchanan, reader at Napier's School of Computing, who nominated David for the prize, said: "David has been an excellent student and we are extremely proud of his achievements. David's research has sparked huge interest and could lead to a system being developed which could detect covert terrorist and criminal activity.

"The School of Computing at Napier has won several national awards for excellence, and David is a fine example of the quality of our students and research."