Terms of Reference | Offensive Cyber Working Group

Context

The Offensive Cyber Working Group launched in September 2020 to offer much-needed academic debate about the role of (offensive) cyber operations in the United Kingdom and internationally. This work continues as a flexible working group of academic researchers, with a website at https://offensivecyber.org.

Purpose of Group

To provide a dedicated academic research community for engagement with research and perspectives on (offensive) cyber operations at an unclassified level. The Group consists of interdisciplinary researchers and others with research interests in UK cyber operations, doctrine, policy and strategy. All members of the group – Steering Committee and College of Experts (see Membership) – are either UK-based or have a significant research focus on the UK offensive cyber landscape.

Objectives

1. To foster and support academic debate and research on offensive cyber both within the United Kingdom and internationally.
2. To develop an interdisciplinary research community on offensive cyber.
3. To develop perspectives on cyber operations, doctrine, policy and strategy.
4. To act as an academic community for engagement with industry, government, and other non-academic stakeholders.

Membership

Membership is composed of either the Steering Committee or as the College of Experts.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is responsible for the strategic direction of the Group and for ensuring the continuity of the Group.

Composition: There shall be a lead (or co-leads), with up to six ordinary members. Individuals must be engaged in public academic research within the UK.

Responsibilities:

1. To manage the strategic direction of the Group
2. To consider any complaints regarding the Group[1] and make a decision about the appropriate action.
3. To recruit members to both the Steering Committee and the College of Experts.

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[1] If a complaint is made, this will require any members who are involved to recuse themselves from the decision. All complaints should be made to steering@offensivecyber.org. If no response acknowledging the complaint is made within 5 working days, please contact Steering Committee members individually. All complaints should receive a decision within one calendar month.

Meetings: These will be convened as required, with an aim for one meeting per quarter.

Decision-Making: All decisions should be made by a majority of the Steering Committee and preferably by consensus. If there is split in a decision, the lead or co-leads should cast the deciding vote. Decisions should be recorded in the minutes of a meeting or through email.

Appointment: Members will be appointed by the Steering Committee as and when required. Every two years, member activity will be reviewed after their appointment, or reappointment, by the Steering Committee. To be re-appointed members will have substantially engaged and participated in the Group's activities during the period of appointment. All members must subscribe to the objectives of the Offensive Cyber Working Group as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

Current Members: Andrew Dwyer (Lead), Neil Ashdown, Louise Marie Hurel, Tim Stevens, Leonie Tanczer

College of Experts
The College is comprised of academic experts from a range of disciplines, inside and outside the United Kingdom, who will be invited to attend events, contribute information, and act as an expert body for the Offensive Cyber Working Group.

Composition: There shall be no limit on the number of members, but members should represent a range of academic disciplines and perspectives. There will be no mandatory public list of members.

Responsibilities:

1. To provide guidance and input on the Group's activities.
2. To attend meetings of the College.
3. To participate in activities of the Group according to the interests of the member.

Appointment: Appointment to the College of Experts will be conducted by the Steering Group and will require a short application through a public call, or by exception, direct appointment on an ad hoc basis. Members must be established or early career researchers who have a dedicated public research profile at a research institution and who work on offensive cyber. Every two years, member activity will be reviewed after their appointment, or reappointment, by the Steering Committee. To be re-appointed members will have engaged and participated in the Group's activities during the period of appointment. It is not expected that a member will consistently engage. All members must subscribe to the objectives of the Offensive Cyber Working Group as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

Version Control

001	January 2023
002	September 2024