



INTENT IN CROWDED PLACES

Introduction

The scale and nature of the threat we face today is radically different from that which we have dealt with in recent decades. This is a new form of terrorism. It exploits modern technologies both to radicalise young people and support acts of terrorism. It is pursued by different groups: networks directed from abroad, as well as by 'self starter' groups or rogue individuals here in the UK. The one common factor is that these terrorists remain committed to inflicting mass casualties. They do not give warnings, have shown a readiness to use suicide tactics, and the majority of their attacks have as a primary intent the deaths of large numbers of people. While there have been attacks against well protected targets around the world, the trend is for terrorists to attack crowded public places.

Levels of protective security in crowded places must be proportionate to the risk. They must ensure that if a terrorist attack does take place any loss of life or serious injury are minimised. However, individuals and businesses must be free to carry on normal social, economic, and democratic activities and, as a result, there will always be some vulnerability to terrorist attack.

It is difficult to detect terrorists in crowded places because they can easily conceal themselves within the crowd. Factors that may distinguish them from the benign majority are the tools of their trade (e.g. weapons), their behaviour and their intent. A great deal of effort is focussed on detecting the tools. In this instance we would like to concentrate on intent and behaviour.

The Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) is seeking innovative approaches to understand, characterise, detect and influence intent in crowded places with a view to reducing the risk of terrorist attacks. Proposals are sought across a range of domains (e.g. contextual, behavioural, physiological and neurological). Novel, inventive and lateral thinking is particularly welcome. Successful proposals will be sponsored by INSTINCT (INnovative Science and Technology IN Counter Terrorism), the OSCT Innovation Programme.

What are we looking for?

INSTINCT seeks any innovative science or technology that could enhance our ability to understand, characterise, detect, or influence intent in crowded places, be it hostile or not. We do not want to constrain your thinking, and offer the following as guidance only.

Hostile or not?

While OSCT is interested in developing knowledge around hostile intent, the intent of those who are friendly or ambivalent is also important. The intent of the innocent in a terrorist incident is significant because it will affect the level of danger and the likelihood of injury. In a search scenario, it is important that we can focus effort on those who are most likely to have hostile intent.

Understand

INSTINCT is interested in developing a deeper fundamental understanding of intent: what is it, and how does it evolve and change?

Characterise

If we better understand intent, then we might be able to recognise patterns and the attributes of a particular type of intent. Can we quantify the level of an individuals' intent?

Detect

We are interested in methods for detecting all types of intent with a high degree of certainty. Hostile intent is of particular interest; we envisage that it might be detected directly or indirectly (by detecting non-hostile individuals and determining by a process of elimination who might be hostile).

Influence

It is important to influence the intent of crowds in order to make crowded places as safe as possible. It is clearly desirable to reduce or change the intent of a hostile individual. Equally, if we can influence the intent of the innocent, for instance *via* messaging or by designing a building in a particular way, this will enable rapid and safe movement away from a danger point, minimising risk and injury.

Scientific domains

We anticipate that ideas might come from the neurological, physiological, behavioural, and social science domains, in addition to the development of enhanced contextual understanding (i.e. how do people typically behave in a given situation). This list is not exhaustive, and other ideas are welcomed.

Preparation and submission of proposals

Proposals should be submitted through the Centre for Defence Enterprise portal by **10 July 2009**. We anticipate that awards will be in the region of £50 - £150k in value, although proposals outside this range will also be given full consideration. Details on how to submit proposals are given [here](#).

Some background information

CONTEST

Since 2003, the UK Government has had a comprehensive strategy in place to counter the threat to this country and to our interests overseas from international terrorism. The strategy is known as CONTEST.

The aim of the strategy is **‘to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from international terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence’**.

More details on CONTEST may be found [here](#).

The Office for Security and Counter Terrorism

The Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) was founded in March 2007 by the Prime Minister. Its functions are to:

- Support the Home Secretary and other Ministers in the development, direction, implementation, and governance of the CONTEST Strategy;
- Deliver directly those aspects of the counter-terrorism strategy which fall to the Home Office;
- Manage counter-terrorism related crises through the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR);
- Facilitate the Home Secretary’s statutory oversight of the Security Service and exercise oversight, on behalf of central Government, of counter-terrorist operations in the UK; and
- Manage the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Security and Safety Strategy.

INSTINCT – INnovative Science and Technology IN Counter-Terrorism

INSTINCT is a programme that seeks innovative solutions to address the objectives of CONTEST. It also aims to improve Government’s ability to move at pace and intelligently manage risk, to make it an effective customer of innovation.

Government needs to be able to respond effectively to developments in technology and the terrorist threat. To do this it needs greater understanding of the innovation community, smarter influence over external innovation and better coordination of investments in innovative ideas and solutions. INSTINCT will supply this.

In addition to this call for proposals, over the coming months INSTINCT will run several additional engagements. For instance, INSTINCT will make use of a technology demonstrator to allow potential suppliers to test products and services that may reduce the risk to the UK from terrorism in a realistic environment.

INSTINCT is delivered by a cross-Government team coordinated by the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT) within the Home Office.

Useful contacts

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