

Global Security Challenge

The Global Security Challenge (GSC), in its fifth year, stimulates technical innovations that make airports, cities, military operations, and enterprises safer by finding and publicly recognizing the most promising security start-ups in the world. This helps focus investor attention on these promising companies. The finals were held at the University of London on November 11-12, and this year's winners were from Australia and Ghana.

The small and medium enterprises (SMEs) category was won by iWebGate from Perth, Australia, and will receive a \$300,000 research and development contract. Their product "DMZ in a Box" delivers a low-cost virtual, highly secure reception area between organizations' trusted networks and the public Internet providing the first line in a layered cyber-defense-in-depth. Hackers attempting to penetrate into the local network are confronted by a ghost network with nothing of value available and a lack of visible stepping stones to access the trusted network. DHS has recommended having a DMZ for several years as part of secure computer network architectures. Regrettably few small and medium enterprises have had the talent or financial resources to build their own. "DMZ in a Box" can be up and running in 20 minutes and costs less than one-tenth of a homegrown system.

The Start-up category was won by mPedigree from Accra, Ghana, Africa, and will receive a \$200,000 research and development contract. mPedigree has developed a low-cost and easy to use approach to verifying the authenticity of pharmaceuticals in Africa and other developing countries where worthless counterfeits indistinguishable from real medicines make up more than 30 percent of the market. Manufacturers add a unique alphanumeric code to the packaging. Upon purchase the patient reveals the code and sends a free SMS message from a cell phone to confirm the authenticity of the drug in an instant. This approach is available at a fraction of the cost of emerging RFID systems and is far more secure than current hologram methods. The system is being demonstrated in Ghana and Nigeria with plans to expand to Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Benin, and Cote D'Ivoire.

This year's keynote speaker was Baroness Neville-Jones Chairman, Minister of State for Security working from the Home Office. During the early 1990s, she chaired the British Joint Intelligence Committee after a long career in the Diplomatic Service. Between 2002 and 2005, she was non-executive chairman of QinetiQ, the company formed by the privatization of UK defense laboratories.

In 2010, more than 200 companies submitted their business plans to the GSC. An international panel of judges representing the U.S. government, security industry professionals and venture capitalists selected three start-ups and three SMEs to present in-person before the judges at five regional semi-finals. These regional competitions were held in September and early October in Singapore, Israel, Washington D.C., Detroit and San Diego. The winners of the regional contests came to London.

The GSC has become a more effective launching pad for security start-ups. The top contenders from the previous three years have subsequently received more than \$80 million in fresh venture capital citing the role of GSC in showcasing their technology in the global innovation marketplace. In addition to TSWG, the GSC has been supported with minor grants from Smiths Detection, London Business School, ONR Global, Accenture, and BAE Systems.

More information about the GSC can be found at <http://www.globalsecuritychallenge.com>.