

Tulane Professor to Speak at Conference Scheduled to Coincide with Nobel Prize Ceremonies

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Peter Scharf, a research professor in Tulane University's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, will discuss the role of technology in reducing crime at the Cisco Public Services Summit, held Dec. 8-10 in Stockholm, Sweden and Dec. 11 in Oslo, Norway. The international conference is co-hosted annually by the city of Stockholm to coincide with the Nobel Prize ceremonies.

The nonprofit Integrated Justice Information Systems Institute (IJIS) is co-sponsoring the summit's session in Stockholm on information sharing in law enforcement and justice that will feature Scharf, an author and nationally recognized leader in criminal justice training, technology and education.

Scharf's address, "Murder, Prevention and Early Intervention and the Knowledge Economy" will focus on preparing at-risk youth to be part of today's information and technologically driven economy. To achieve this, Scharf calls for "social and technological immersion experiences into the knowledge economy for at-risk youth."

The social dimension of this approach would teach at-risk youth the norms of working in a modern business environment including the respectful exchange of ideas, teamwork and problem-solving while technological training would teach them how to acquire information through the Internet, model problems using a spreadsheet, organize information in a data base and teach themselves skills using educational software.

"The idea is to get these kids before they enter the penal system. Computerized criminal records, easily accessible to employers, create a kind of digital gulag that keeps a person branded for life as a criminal unfit for employment," Scharf says. "We need to immerse at-risk youth in broad educational experiences related to the knowledge economy at an early age so they can become productive members of society and never see the inside of that virtual gulag."

The IJIS Institute's session will bring executives and leaders from around the world in government, law enforcement and justice to discuss the importance of information sharing, collaborating and new ideas to combat global crime issues such as human trafficking, drugs, identity theft and terrorism.

"We are hoping that this summit session will initiate a larger dialogue about how we can bring international information sharing to a new level to combat the many serious forms of crime that are truly beyond the capacity of any single nation to address," said Paul Wormeli, executive director of the IJIS Institute.

The IJIS session supports the overall theme of the 2008 Cisco Public Services Summit, "Sustainability, Innovation and Inclusion." More information on the Public Services Summit can be found at <http://www.cisco.com/web/learning/le21/le34/nobel/2008/index.html>