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August 17, 2012 12:00 am • Tom Beal Arizona Daily Star

100 days of science: UA professor, TPD advanced crime analysis

The Arizona Daily Star's Centennial salute to science in Arizona runs all summer. Each day, for 100 days, we'll record a milestone in the state's scientific history.

You might expect that a scientific breakthrough developed by the UA's Eller School of Business and the Tucson Police Department would have some immediate, practical application.

COPLINK, a data mining technique now used by more than 4,500 law-enforcement agencies, began as a collaboration between Hsinchun Chen, a professor of management information systems at the University of Arizona and the Tucson Police Department, which was seeking a faster way to develop leads and solve cases.

Chen and his UA team combined a variety of TPD databases and developed a usable interface that turned days and weeks of paper shuffling into a 20-minute computer search.

The collaboration attracted funding, beginning in 1997, from the National Institute of Justice and the National Science Foundation. Chen then created a company to commercialize the product. That company, Knowledge Computing, merged with British analytical software company i2, which was acquired by IBM last year. Its 100 employees still work in Tucson as an arm of IBM's Industry Solutions group.

Chen, director of the UA's Artificial Intelligence Lab, has also turned his group's attention to international terrorism.

The lab's Dark Web project is collecting Web content produced by terrorist groups and subjecting it to multilingual analysis in a long-term effort to "study and understand the international terrorism (Jihadist) phenomena via a computational, data-centric approach."

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Sources: Arizona Daily Star archives, UA News

From: The Arizona Daily Star Website, http://azstarnet.com/news/science/days-of-science-ua-professor-tpd-advanced-crime-analysis/article_f9628c72-95f7-505f-a0ec-a379ba05614c.html, accessed August 21, 2012.