



## Unifying the Global Response to Cybercrime

Peter Cassidy  
Cambridge, MA

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Dear Faculty Search Committee,

It's my pleasure to strongly recommend Dr. Jesse Sowell for the position of lecturer in the Department of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Public Policy at University College London. My endorsement here is composed with some urgency as our times demand the attentions of scholars of broad expertise and the kind of acumen that can build bridges between the relevant disciplines that cyber affairs occupy by their nature.

Cybercrime arrived in the Anglophone democracies and Brazil, (of course), in the early naughts and set its sights on retail banking customers to devastating effect. Since then, cybercrime has expanded in scope and in its industrial architecture (however illicit its constituents' enterprises) and now has the power to damage key nations' economies and political stability.

Response to cybercrime with one-off legislative efforts or technical approaches or prosecutions of cybergangs or deployments of public awareness programs will always leave civilization far behind the attacking cohort and at increasing peril. Comprehensive solutions must emerge from hybridized approaches drawn from multiple disciplines and domains at once in order to be effective to any degree that matters.

This is where Dr. Sowell's scholarship is key to much more than advanced research at UCL – but to realizing the language and tools that are required to interrogate global cybercrime threats and posit solutions that would leverage the writ and purview of the intersecting institutions that must be orchestrated to actually effect those solutions.

Dr. Sowell's work came into view at Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG) some years ago, perhaps inevitably, given the consonance of his research and APWG's mission. As a trade association, APWG's institutional motivation is to give operations and technical managers a seat at all the tables in which the work of its members could be dis-impered - or complimented - by policies, standards or conventions of domains that intersect in its members' mission to manage cybercrime.

APWG has made its presentations and data contributions in that regard at European Commission, Council of Europe (Budapest Convention on Cybercrime), the Organization of American States, OECD, IMF, Commonwealth of Nations (Cybercrime



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Initiative), United Nations (Office of Drugs and Crime), and the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. After 15 years of providing data and analyses to these treaty organizations, APWG's role seems to be shifting toward providing recommendations and prioritization criteria – tasks that would benefit from the research energies of Dr. Sowell and his students at UCL.

Further, APWG has over the years contributed commentary to these bodies as well as to key nations' ministries and engaged them as data exchange partners.<sup>1</sup> Most recently, APWG embarked upon a series of data policy research symposia in order to pull together the research disciplines and authoritative venues that must act in concert to effect meaningful solutions of global scale.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Sowell, in fact, helped to organize our latest full-spectrum data policy symposium in Barcelona in 2018, building the agenda and bringing in a number of key investigators to the delegation adding important perspective to an already vibrant dialog that needed their voices to balance with its largely industry and law enforcement constituencies. A number of APWG industrial members pointed out that the translational nature of the dialog and the interdisciplinary approach was essential, one of which, now a recently acquired Microsoft company, is considering sponsoring another of these policy symposia in partnership with APWG.

Dr. Sowell has already been incorporated into the project planning at APWG's Applied Research Secretariat, a sponsored research section that is beginning its tenure as a research center within the larger APWG/APWG.EU plexus. Our PhishFarm project, which will measure the efficacy of browser blocklists to list and deflect users from accessing phishing websites, will engage Dr. Sowell as an analyst to consider policy aspects that the resulting PhishFarm data precipitates may illuminate. Do please note that this project is the first of any number that will follow that will be available to his MPA students and doctoral candidates in the coming years.

My sense, as a founder and Secretary General of APWG and a research collaborator to a number of university researchers in different capacities, is that Dr. Sowell's appoint-

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<sup>1</sup> APWG Policy and Position Papers and Correspondence 2010 to 2020 (Abridged)  
[https://ecrimeresearch.org/applied\\_research/](https://ecrimeresearch.org/applied_research/)

<sup>2</sup> <https://apwg.org/2018-symposium-on-policy-impediments-to-cybercrime-data-exchange/>



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ment would be of enormous benefit to your research, engagement, and graduate student community with concentrations in cyber related studies directly and immediately – and, further on, as a catalyst to STEaPP's institutional development as a center of cyber research that is referenced by industry, policy, law enforcement and multilateral communities.

Dr. Sowell's experience in bridging the interests of policy communities and operational and technical cohorts is exactly what is needed today if managing cybercrime to the margins as we've done with communicable disease is to be achieved at similar global scale. Establishment and cultivation of venues (in the academy and elsewhere) that emphasize public-health models of intervention against cybercrime is key to a truly globalized response to cybercrime.

In the candidacy of Dr. Sowell, it is this correspondent's opinion that STEaPP has an opportunity to bring an innovative, outgoing researcher and lecturer into its ranks but, most importantly, to draw important communities of interest to its door and make the best use of them to ignite and maintain keystone dialogs that have yet to be fully invigorated, memorialized and codified within authoritative venues.

Among those communities of interest will be the APWG and its varied crowd of researchers, cops, policy types, industry investigators and diplomats who have gathered around the APWG's own eCrime research symposia (since 2006, with proceedings published by the IEEE) and the APWG's eCrime eXchange cybercrime data clearinghouse.

Do please know I look forward to the news of Dr. Sowell being engaged by STEaPP but the discussions I anticipate with greatest excitement are those regarding APWG and STEaPP collaborations over key questions of managing cybercrime in our time.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Cassidy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Cassidy  
Secretary General  
APWG