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The NCITEr Newsletter July 2023

National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education Center

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JULY 2023

A graphic with the word "RELEVANCE" in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters. The letter "V" is replaced by a lightbulb icon with rays emanating from it. Below "RELEVANCE" is the text "NCITE YEAR FOUR" in red, sans-serif capital letters.

RELEVANCE
NCITE YEAR FOUR

Dear Jennie,

If there's one thing I've learned during our consortium's first three years, it's that powerful work is driven by powerful words.

Up until now, the NCITE narrative has largely centered around one word: *Growth*. We told the story of *who we are* to establish our name and reputation as the nation's newest and most innovative tool to combat terrorism and targeted violence. We used the power of that story to add more people to our team, more projects and partners to our consortium, to fulfill the commitment we made to the U.S. government to build the largest, most diverse network of counterterrorism and violence prevention researchers in the nation.

We're still growing. But as we enter our fourth research year, I want to update the narrative, shifting focus from *who we are* to *what we do*. In Year 4, I hope to center our story around a new word:

Relevance.

As you'll read in the stories below, NCITE has proven to be a relevant partner producing significant work for the national security mission community. Our colleagues at the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) learned as much in May when we [traveled to the Beltway to demonstrate the malign potential of the metaverse](#). Our partners at the National Threat Evaluation and Reporting Office (NTER) learned the same when they [came to us in Nebraska to explore opportunities for collaboration](#).

Our Year 4 portfolio is shaping up to be an impactful, especially relevant one. Look for the full list of NCITE projects to come next month. Meanwhile, we remain attuned to the many, varied threats that confront our nation.

And I'm confident that NCITE is up to the task of equipping our partners with the knowledge and tools to overcome them.



GINA LIGON
NCITE Center Director



NCITE Shares Expertise at Ag Threats Symposium



NCITE expert **Michael Logan** presented at a conference on threats facing the agriculture sector hosted by the FBI and Nebraska Farm Bureau. “We know that ideology matters,” he said. “Ideology is an important motivation for target selection.”

[READ ABOUT LOGAN'S PRESENTATION](#)

Threat Assessment, Nebraska-Style: NTER Visits NCITE



A team from the National Threat Evaluation and Reporting (NTER) Office visited NCITE experts in Omaha and Lincoln this summer to share capabilities and challenges. And, as an added bonus, to get a taste of game day at Memorial Stadium.

LEARN MORE ABOUT NTER

NCITE Heads Across the Pond



NCITE is going international this week, with a team of faculty and students attending BASS23, the conference on Behavioural Social Sciences in Security, at the University of Bath in the United Kingdom. Faculty attendees are:

- **Austin Doctor**, head of counterterrorism research initiatives
- **Erin Kearns**, head of prevention research initiatives

Three NCITE students will present research posters:

- **Angie Benda**, *Understanding Novel Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) Deterrence Strategies*
- **Eva Burklund**, *What Did He Say?: Analyzing Differences in Far-Right Rhetoric*
- **Callie Vitro**, *Breaking Down Barriers for Public Reporting of Suspicious Activity*

The conference is hosted by the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST). Safe travels to all!

NCITE Demonstrates Metaverse Tech in D.C.



In May, NCITE students and faculty traveled to the Beltway to demonstrate the malevolent potential of virtual reality technology for professionals at the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). The "metaverse roadshow," said **Austin Doctor**, "felt like we were doing what we are here at NCITE to do."

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ROADSHOW

NCITE News and Updates



Hughes Joins Full-Time Team

Seamus Hughes, a leading figure in the field of counterterrorism and extremism research, has joined the center's full-time team at the University of Nebraska at Omaha as the senior research faculty and policy associate based in Washington, D.C. In addition to leading efforts to connect NCITE research directly with partners based in the capital, Hughes will lead a new research effort that examines patterns of criminal behavior of domestic and international extremists.



Walters Takes on Expanded Role

Kayla Walters, NCITE senior research associate, is taking on an expanded role. In addition to continuing to oversee the center's cooperative agreement projects, she will begin to serve as lead investigator on other NCITE grants and projects. She will also work to shape NCITE's internal workforce development opportunities.



Hunter Gets Named Professorship

Sam Hunter, NCITE head of strategic operations, has been appointed to the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Regent/Foundation Professorship, effective Sept. 1. The position is awarded on the basis of outstanding performance in research and creative activity.



Asal Receives Two Awards

Victor Asal, State University of New York at Albany, received two awards at the International Studies Association's annual convention in Montreal in March. Asal received the ALIAS Distinguished Scholar Award for excellence in international affairs scholarship, and the ENMISA Distinguished Scholar Award, given to senior scholars who have had an impact in ethnicity, nationalism, and migration studies.



Reiter-Palmon Elected to Council

Roni Reiter-Palmon, University of Nebraska at Omaha, has been elected to serve as a Council Representative for Division 14 of the American Psychological Association (APA) leadership council. She will serve from January 2024 until December 2026.



Connelly Receives Award

Shane Connelly, University of Oklahoma, has received the Oklahoma Student Government Association's Outstanding Faculty Award. Connelly was chosen from among all the faculty at the university.

Got News to Share? Tell Us!

Do you know an NCITE investigator who has done something amazing recently? We want to know! Please share news about awards, publications, and other accomplishments early and often. We welcome student news especially – thesis defenses, conference presentations, accepted journal articles, and more. Email ncite@unomaha.edu.

A Successful Season of End-User Working Groups

Dozens of government partners dialed in for NCITE's end-user working groups this summer. The center regularly holds these virtual meetings with key stakeholders to share updates on the progress of research projects. These discussions build connections between our researchers and government partners and allow for working national security professionals to provide relevant feedback.

Come Work at NCITE

NCITE is hiring for a **[Research Associate](#)**. The successful candidate will work with NCITE faculty and students, taking a lead role in supporting our research projects through an array of tasks, including management of project deliverables, writing manuscripts and reports, and presenting research outcomes. [Apply online](#).

More Career Opportunities in National Security




- **[Policy Analyst](#)**
Office of Counterterrorism and Emerging Threats
 - **[DHS I&A Internship Program](#)**
DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis
-

A Sampling of NCITEr in the News

- **Seamus Hughes** (University of Nebraska at Omaha), [***The Detroit News***](#)
Hughes describes the sentencing of a man who fought with ISIS in Syria.
- **Gina Ligon** (University of Nebraska at Omaha), [***Washington Post***](#)
Ligon describes the persistent threat of extremist organizations despite blows to their leadership structures as a result of the Jan. 6 prosecutions.
- **Karyn Sporer** (University of Maine), [***News Center Maine***](#)
Sporer adds context to this story about authorities dismissing charges against members of NSC-13.
- **Gary Ackerman** (University at Albany), [***Government Technology***](#)
Ackerman commented on two new labs at SUNY's Albany campus that explore social media monitoring, digital forensics, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and geospatial analysis.
- **Matthew Jensen, Shane Connelly** (University of Oklahoma), [***KMOX***](#)
Jensen and Connelly discuss their project exploring radicalization in online spaces.



NCITE NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM
INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY,
AND EDUCATION CENTER
A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

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