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Fraud Women's Network

Toni Sless

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Toni Sless, organiser of the Fraud Women's Network

A friendly face in the room

Our regular contributor Una Riley writes:

Recently I have been actively trying to reach out to other women in the wider world of security to inform them of the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals in the hope that they might consider applying. I came across a very interesting organisation: The Fraud Women's Network (FWN). Toni Sless is the founder and chairwoman of the network which was launched in March 2007. Toni works for UK Payments Administration (formerly APACS) as Fraud Project Manager. Previously Toni worked at Kroll as the ID Theft Business Development Manager in their Background Screening Division in the UK, and before that she was with Bank of America. Her experience in this sector ranges from corporate institutions such as GE

Money to the Serious Fraud Office and the National Fraud Review. I wanted to find out more and recently caught up with her in a delightful wine bar in the City of London. Over a huge plate of 'sausage and mash' washed down with a couple of glasses of fine wine I asked Toni what exactly the FWN was about and when it was established.

Gathering

Toni replied: "We started life in early 2004 as an informal gathering of women from different organisations – all involved in the anti-fraud arena – who met irregularly on a social basis. Over time we realised that these gatherings had become a very useful forum in which to share views, experience and expertise. We therefore decided to put things on a more formal footing and to extend the

network to all women involved in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of fraud." Will the organisation be opened to other areas of the world of security, I asked. She said: "Although all areas of security are important ... we feel that there is a simple reason why a network for women in the anti-fraud business is so significant. Any woman who works in the anti-fraud arena will know that it can be a rather male environment, in which there are few female senior executives. The aim of the FWN is therefore to provide a way for all women in all types of anti-fraud activity from around the country to get together, establish and cement contacts, share knowledge, opinions and experiences, and support and learn from each other. We want to bring together women of all levels of seniority from financial institutions, corporate organisations, accountancy firms, law firms, regulatory bodies, government institutions, law enforcement and prosecuting authorities, to try and make our jobs just slightly easier – in an area that's already difficult enough! We aim to provide women in the anti-fraud business with the chance to network." I took the occasion to discuss the fellowship and networking opportunities in the City of London and how we may be able to introduce female security professionals from the FWN to the Worshipful Company. We agreed that there was a synergistic reason for meeting up to discuss this matter further. I then went on to ask Toni more about FWN's networking prospects. "Our regular networking events provide an invaluable chance to make contacts across the entire anti-fraud arena. This not only gives us the opportunity to share information and ideas but we also enjoy the social aspect ... it is great to meet other women who are in the same sector and it is amazing how quickly you start to recognise women that you have met at the FWN and then when you attend a seminar or function you feel you can confidently approach that person. It is good to have a friendly face in the room that you can walk up to and with whom you can start chatting." We both talked at length about being the only woman in the room at security



Una Riley has worked on behalf of many security industry associations. She is a Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals and is Master of the Guild of Public Relations Practitioners.

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Lord's cricket ground, London

Photo by Sarah Williams

Cricket access goes green

Lord's cricket ground used to have various access control systems which meant issue of multiple cards to staff - who had to remember which fob worked with which system. The complexity meant effective audit trails were difficult. Owners Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) decided to rationalise access control and consultants. Installers ICTS UK won the contract. Minimal disruption was vital at the St John's Wood ground. Installed at 24 doors were networkable entry controllers from Dublin-based Access Control Technology (ACT) Ltd: ACTpro 3000 controllers with Mifare 1040 readers. Controllers are linked to the venue's LAN to provide a site-wide solution, while the readers have allowed programming of cards for MCC staff by ACTWin pro software. The pavilion with its famous Long Room is Grade II-listed. That the kit was IP-addressable meant the controllers could 'piggy-back' on existing conduit. This reduced engineering disruption and proved a 'green' approach in terms of minimising material use. The new product can give reports on the location of individuals around the venue plus multiple control from the site-wide IT system. □

Airport funding

Airport security was among the topics legislated for in the Policing and Crime Bill that received Royal Assent in November. It included what the Government called a 'consistent funding process' whereby airport operators pay for policing. Also covered were security plans and threat assessment. □

functions and how it has got better over the past ten years but still has a long way to go for the younger women coming into the profession.

Education

We also spoke about education and mentoring opportunities and Toni went on to say. "We have access to a wide-ranging education programme about the latest trends and developments in fraud and organised crime, and the newest tools to help prevent, detect and investigate fraud. With regards to mentoring many of the members of the FWN are senior within their organisations and have a great deal of knowledge, experience and advice that they can impart, as well as being able to encourage junior women to progress in their careers." Toni also gave me a flavour of how fraud is costing everyone money. She explained that the estimated fraud costs to the UK economy is about £14 billion every year - that is almost £27,000 per minute or nearly £450 per second! That equates to a cost of £650 per household per year! Toni also stressed that these are considered to be under-estimated figures. We also discussed the culture of British business, and how it has a tendency to inhibit proper fraud prevention; from shrinkage in the retail sector to high end fraud. Toni spoke of the need to promote the awareness of fraud and successful fraud prevention strategies across both public and private sectors by creating a culture of transparency, with better information flow and open discussion which would hopefully result in a more widespread understanding. We both agreed that the public would prefer to know the truth.

In the chair

Toni wanted to stress the support that the forum had experienced. "We are very lucky in that the FWN has had a lot of internal and external support. Our patron is Rosalind Wright CB QC (who is also the chairman of the Fraud Advisory Panel - the independent fraud watchdog) who has a wealth of experience. "Rosalind is

a non-executive director of the Office of Fair Trading and the Department of Trade and Industry (Insolvency Service Board and Legal Services Group Board) and is chairman of the Supervisory Committee of OLAF, the European Anti-Fraud Office. Her vast experience includes Director of the Serious Fraud Office (from 1997 to April 2003) and previously General Counsel and an Executive Director for 10 years at the Securities and Futures Authority (one of the principal City of London financial services regulators). Prior to taking up that appointment, she was an Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions at the DPP's Department where she worked for 18 years, after five years in practice at the Bar. So you can see the caliber of mentorship and experience we have. Then of course there are the directors and steering groups within FWN ... all of which devote their own time to making this organisation what it is today. We all have day jobs and this is a voluntary organisation. I can't emphasise enough my gratitude to everyone who helps to build the FWN and of course all our members. Externally we have the National Federation of Fraud Forums (www.frauduk.org) which has done a lot of work in this area and has been a massive supporter of FWN."

Ambition

I asked Toni of her ambition for the FWN. She replied: "Apart from the aspects we have already discussed ... I would like to see the FWN recognised as an important tool to assist in the fight against organised crime and fraud." A view I wholeheartedly endorse. Any female security professionals interested in joining either group, details below. □ Visit www.fraudwomensnetwork.com, Email: info@fraudwomensnetwork.com. www.wcosp.org Email: The Company Clerk, Judith Pleasance: clerk@wcosp.org The FWN plans a Leeds event on telecoms fraud in January; and updates on employee and insurance frauds. It also runs socials such as on the Thames on Guy Fawkes Night, in aid of The Eve Appeal.



About Toni Sless: She joined the UK Payments Administration (formerly APACS) in February 2009 as Fraud Project Manager covering customer authentication and KYC [know your customer] in the remote banking and face to face channels; data compromise; internal fraud and account takeover. Visit www.ukpayments.org.uk