

Waging War with Pictures and Words

FROM THE
INTERAGENCY
VISUAL MEDIA GROUP

At a nondescript office building in Northern Virginia, an Emmy-winning video producer walks down a subterranean corridor. She stops at a door with a benign alpha-numeric designation and punches her personal pass code into an entry keypad. The pad buzzes, the lock snaps open, she enters and the door quietly, but firmly, shuts.

In a windowless cubicle at the end of a narrow hall, a male colleague sits absorbed among a bank of high definition monitors. He is surrounded by the latest video technology and supported by state of the art IT applications. Backlit LED displays cast a pale glow onto his face while his hands race across multiple keyboards. The producer sits down beside him, and she focuses on the screens loaded with classified information. So begins the workday those highly skilled media pros.

The public never sees that work, but it is as polished and professional as that aired daily on any network. It includes sophisticated 3-D animation that will be presented on Capitol Hill and might affect funding of a critical U.S. surveillance systems.

For decades, classified content producers working at the CIA, FBI, Defense Intelligence Agency and other "intelligence community" (IC) agencies labored in isolation. They rarely met with colleagues, there was no public forum for networking, and there were no community-wide programs to recognize excellence.

In 2007 that changed when Director of National Intelligence John Michael McConnell charged the IC to institute a culture of collaboration. McConnell was responding to the findings of the



9/11 Commission that said "information isolation" facilitated the 9/11 attack. That led to the IC being directed to collaborate, share information and exchange best practices.

IVMG

At that time, a small cadre of media professionals working at the Media Services Center of the National Reconnaissance Office, established the Interagency Visual Media Group (IVMG), which is a forum for IC media professionals to

share ideas through professional collaboration, exchange technical information and demonstrate production techniques in the field of electronic presentation. Among its achievements, the IVMG also sponsors the annual IC Media Excellence (Icy) Awards, which recognize outstanding achievement in media production created in support of U.S. intelligence missions.

A highlight of the IVMG is its annual conference. The 2011 IVMG Conference is scheduled for Oct. 6 at the Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Washington. The program features dozens of breakout sessions and a keynote address by senior national security analyst for CBS News Juan Zarate, who served in the George W. Bush White House as deputy national security advisor.

The conference also offers a rare opportunity for commercial vendors to reach an audience that is often inaccessible, as well as for those who generate media products in support of intelligence and military missions to pick up tips and share techniques in a variety of media formats.

IVMG, the Icy Awards and other collaborative initiatives, allow these dedicated creative types to come together, share information and elevate the quality and effectiveness of their work through collaboration. ★

MORE INFO

INTERAGENCY VISUAL
MEDIA GROUP
CONFERENCE:
www.nro.gov/IVMG