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Former U.S. Attorney David J. Hickton Appointed Founding Director of Pitt Cyber Institute

By Sharon S. Blake

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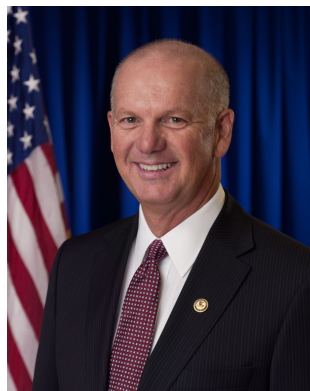
[David J. Hickton](#), former United States Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania, has been appointed founding director of the University of Pittsburgh [Institute for Cyber Law, Policy, and Security](#).

"With the appointment of David Hickton, the University of Pittsburgh is poised to offer significant contributions to the national discussion on cyber-related issues affecting personal, national, and global security and privacy," said Pitt Chancellor Patrick Gallagher.

"David Hickton will marshal Pitt's extensive capabilities and assemble a group of leading thinkers in this emerging field who will enrich Pitt's learning and research environment," said Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Patricia E. Beeson. "We have an array of very talented and motivated faculty working in areas of cyber law, policy, security, and technology, and we believe the institute and the record of accomplishment David brings will offer opportunity for a vital synergy."

Hickton's work is expected to bring about new and innovative thinking on combating cybercrime within a dynamic digital landscape. It will involve the contributions of faculty members in the recently approved School of Computing and Information, which will open in July. In order to continue his diligent work in trying to curb the heroin and opioid epidemic, Hickton also has been named a fellow of Pitt's Institute of Politics.

Hickton's work as Western Pennsylvania's U.S. Attorney from 2010 until he stepped down in November 2016 brought several high profile indictments, including those of five members of the Chinese People's Liberation Army for cybertheft from several Pittsburgh companies and the United Steelworkers of America. His office also indicted Russian hacker Evgeniy Bogachev, one of the most prominent cybercriminals in the world, and dismantled the computer hacking forum known as Darkode, in which cybercriminals bought, sold, traded, and shared information.



David Hickton

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The institute will host its first event "Russian Hacking: What Do We Know and How is This Different?" For more information and to RSVP for the Feb. 2 event, visit <https://cyber.pitt.edu>

Hickton has been an advocate for cybersecurity vigilance, as well as the development of methods to defend the nation's systems infrastructure. He played an integral role in creating legal practices for cybercrime investigations and prioritized the prosecution of computer crimes throughout his tenure.

"The challenges of the digital platform and cybersecurity are real," said Hickton. "It is the crime paradigm of this era, and to defeat it, we must have the full participation of the public and private sectors, as well as the University community."

He said that the new institute will build on Pitt's existing strengths in the area of cybersecurity and provide a platform for innovative solutions that are critical to meet cybercrime threats. He envisions the institute as "a magnet to attract students and others with cyber interest and proficiency to the University and to Western Pennsylvania."

"This is broader than just law enforcement," said Hickton. "This is about applying law to digital space and developing laws and norms and rules to apply to this open environment."

Prior to serving as U.S. Attorney, Hickton was in private practice for more than 25 years in the areas of transportation, litigation, commercial, and white-collar crime. He served the Honorable Gustave Diamond, senior district judge, as a law clerk within the United States District Court for Western Pennsylvania.

Hickton is a fellow of both the American College of Trial Lawyers and the Academy of Trial Lawyers of Allegheny County. He has been admitted before the United States Supreme Court, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania, and several of the U.S. Circuit Courts.

Hickton earned his Juris Doctor degree at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law in 1981 and a bachelor's degree at The Pennsylvania State University in 1978.



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