

# NICE Systems

According to *Globes*, NetApp's Israeli customers include the IDF, "all the semiconductor companies" and telecommunications giants Pelephone (owned by Bezeq) and Cellcom. (See previous issue, pp.11 and 17.) Another prominent NetApp customer is state-owned war contractor, Israel Aerospace Industries. (See previous issue, p.48.)

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## Canada Pension Plan Investments

2012 shares = \$4 million  
(Direct & indirect investments)

2011 shares = \$5 million  
(Direct investments only)

This Israeli company, with US\$1.5 billion in 2010 assets, provides wiretapping and surveillance products for numerous spy agencies, military, police forces, and private corporations around the world. NICE Systems' products are used to intercept, record and analyse vast amounts of information from "unstructured multimedia" sources, such as "telephony, web, radio and video communications."

NICE Systems explains that it: "provides intelligence organizations and national security agencies with advanced mass and target solutions for communication interception, collection, processing and analysis. NiceTrack's innovative technology supports mass interception that enhances target monitoring and exposes new suspects."

NICE is also proud to say it "provides Law Enforcement Agencies with mission-critical solutions [that] retrieve target location, relations and conversation content from any type of communication including fax, fixed and mobile telephony, and Internet applications."

The Israeli military's Homeland Security Companies' catalogue (2011), says that NICE enables

"capture, analysis and correlation of data from multiple sensors and systems, including audio, video, radio, geo-location and web, providing a framework for fusing data silos into a single, holistic operational view."

In 2009, NICE won the first annual Homeland Security Award for Best Video Storage/Digital Transmission System. This award, from *Government Security News*, the world's leading trade magazine on "homeland security," was for NICE Vision, "an intelligent video surveillance solution." NICE Vision made the news five years earlier when "[u]nder the aegis of the

[Israeli] Industry and Trade Ministry's chief scientist," the largest war industries in Israel "set up a consortium" "to find technological solutions for the struggle against international terrorism." This consortium, which Israel's newspaper, *Haaretz*, called an "Israeli dream team," included the country's top military contractor, Elbit Systems, as well as Israel's second and third largest war industries: Israel Aerospace Industries and Rafael. (See previous issue, pp.28-29 and 48-49.)

Elbit's deputy director-general for security research, Uri Dobkin, chaired this "Israeli dream team." He had initially "proposed the idea of a consortium" in 2007, "with Nice Systems, to cooperate on detection and surveillance development." NICE Vision was involved in the consortium's "development of technology for marking and surveillance." Other "dream team" members included Verint. (See previous issue, pp.43-47, and "Verizon" in this issue, pp.48-49.)

NICE has also provided an "advanced Voice over IP [Internet Protocol] and Radio over IP capturing and debriefing solution, to be implemented in RAFAEL Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence environments."

The prominent role played by NICE within Israel's "homeland security" business sector was exemplified in 2010 by the company's role as "Platinum Sponsor" of the first "Israel Homeland Security International Conference." This event attracted military, intelligence and security companies from around the world to showcase their wares for sale in Israel.

Currently, NICE Systems' chief product officer is Udi Ziv. *Business Week's* website says Ziv was "a Senior Software Engineer in Army Intelligence developing state-of-the-art intelligence system for the Israel Defense Forces."



**Benjamin Levin, and six friends from Israel's top, intelligence unit, founded NICE Systems in 1986.**

## Spinoff from Israeli Spy Agency

To understand NICE Systems' close links with Israeli military intelligence we need to examine its origins. The International Directory of Company Histories (ICDH) calls NICE Systems an "Israeli Intelligence Spinoff." In describing how the company began, *Forbes* business paper reported that NICE Systems was:

"Launched by a group of friends working together in the same intelligence unit of the Israeli Defense Forces. It sold communications intelligence products to government agencies used to locate, intercept and monitor radio transmissions."

*Business Week's* biography of NICE Systems' long-time president, chairman and co-founder, Benjamin Levin, says he served in the IDF "where he held various positions in a technological intelligence unit, retiring with the rank of lieutenant colonel."

In *The Shadow Factory*, a book about the US National Security Agency (NSA) and its use of Israeli mass surveillance companies to eavesdrop on Americans, James Bamford quotes Levin as saying that NICE cofounders "were seven people from the Unit... we all worked on a project for more than four years, we knew each other very well. We had very good complementary skills."

The "Unit" that Levin refers to is Unit 8200, a top-secret section of the IDF which – being the equivalent of the NSA – is responsible for all of Israel's electronic intelligence gathering operations.

*Business Week's* executive biography of Levin says that "from 1981 to 1985," he "served as a Project Manager for the IDF in a development project conducted by TRW." This TRW connection is also noted in the ICDH, which explains that among NICE's "early products" was

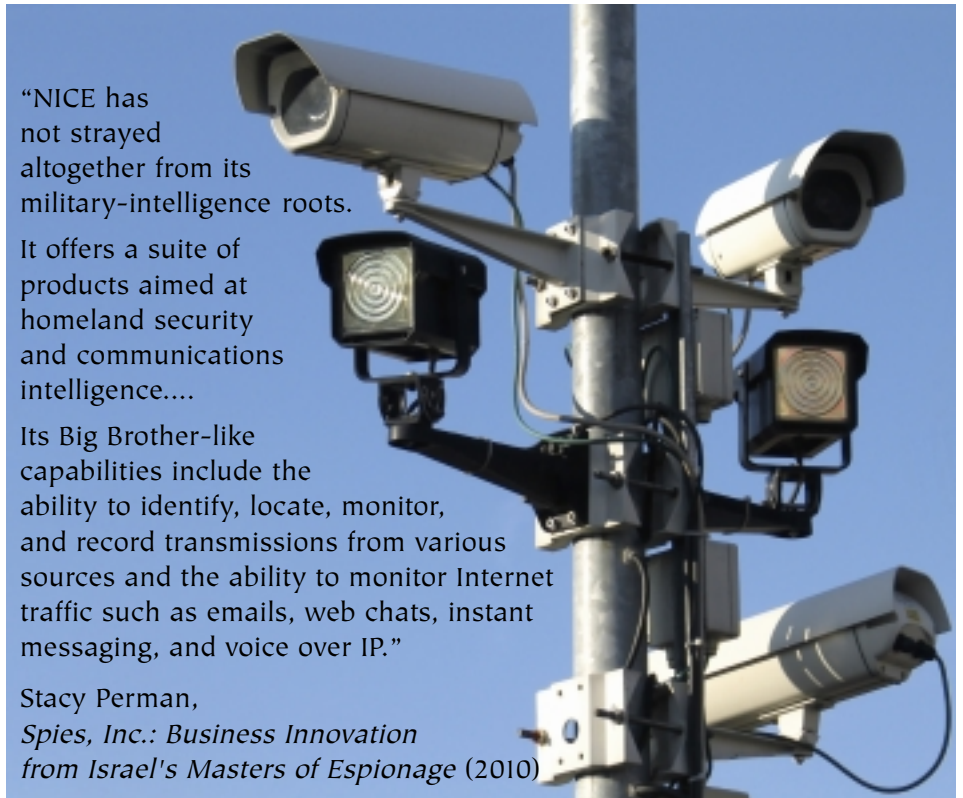
"its COMINT [communications intelligence] system which allowed users to detect, locate, monitor, and record radio transmissions. In order to penetrate foreign markets, the company teamed up with TRW ... in a development partnership. The company's relationship with TRW was already strong, as Levin had

"NICE has not strayed altogether from its military-intelligence roots.

It offers a suite of products aimed at homeland security and communications intelligence....

Its Big Brother-like capabilities include the ability to identify, locate, monitor, and record transmissions from various sources and the ability to monitor Internet traffic such as emails, web chats, instant messaging, and voice over IP."

Stacy Perman,  
*Spies, Inc.: Business Innovation from Israel's Masters of Espionage* (2010)



served as project manager for TRW's operations in Israel since the early 1980s."

In describing the early history of NICE Systems, *Forbes* explained that "it sold communications intelligence products to government agencies used to locate, intercept and monitor radio transmissions."

*Business Week* also notes that Levin received the Israeli "Chief of Intelligence Award for Creative Thinking in 1978." Israel's Chief of Intelligence heads the Directorate of Military Intelligence, or Aman, which is the central, overarching military intelligence agency of the IDF.

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