



# IPRC CONNECTIONS

*Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center*

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## HSI prioritizes IP and trade law enforcement in 2020 goals



Now that 2019 has drawn to a close, it is time to look back on some of the highlights of this past year and, more importantly, to look ahead for opportunities as part of the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) *2020 Goals and Priorities*. As many of you know, 2019 marked the first full year of the realignment of the HSI-led National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPR Center) into the Global Trade Investigations Division (GTID) which is included among the goals released by HSI Acting Executive Associate Director Alysa Erichs.

The goals are intended to unify HSI efforts to create a “one-stop-shop” to support and coordinate all U.S. global trade investigations; prevent illicit trade practices; bring together government and private industry stakeholders to share information and to establish best practices; and coordinate efforts to combat the exploitation of legitimate trade.

As we move forward into the new year, IPR Center Director Steve Francis points to a few of the significant accomplishments of 2019, including a new partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs; a signed partnership with Liberty Shared to combat forced labor in global commerce; and, the creation of a new advisory board with the International Anticounterfeiting Coalition. The IPR Center also reported counterfeit seizures rose to \$1.4 billion; assisted law enforcement worldwide to seize more than one million websites on the heels of Black Friday/Cyber Monday enforcement; hosted its first ever Innovation Week; conducted a vaping and e-cigarette roundtable and hosted the recent digital piracy summit.



## IPR Center digital piracy summit emphasizes enforcement priorities



Immigration and Customs Enforcement Acting Deputy Director Derek Benner delivered the keynote address at the IPR Center digital piracy summit. He cited intellectual property (IP) enforcement and –more specifically – digital piracy as one of HSI’s top priorities, with assurances that the IPR Center will remain focused on enforcement results.

“Digital piracy is an ever-evolving threat to our commerce and intellectual property,” Benner stated. “Those involved in digital piracy utilize continually advancing technology to both expand their reach and evade law enforcement.”

Dozens of HSI case agents were among the more than 130 attendees, including representatives from the Motion Picture Association and the Recording Industry Association of America who were recognized for their support in two recent HSI digital piracy investigations. Two individuals pleaded guilty to charges of copyright infringement in connection with their operation of an organization selling illicit streaming devices. The guilty plea was the first of its kind in the country.

In the second case, an individual was recently indicted for allegedly hacking the accounts of music producers and management companies in order to steal over 50 gigabytes of content – including music pending public release – and leaking it on the internet. The summit also featured Dr. Michael Smith of the Carnegie Mellon University, who delivered a presentation on the current digital piracy ecosystem.

**Did you know...** that global online piracy costs the U.S. economy at least **\$29.2 billion** in lost revenue each year, according to this study: <https://www.theglobalipcenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Digital-Video-Piracy.pdf>

## IPR Center hosts roundtable discussion on vaping and e-cigarettes

The HSI-led IPR Center hosted law enforcement officials, legislative representatives, and health care professionals for a roundtable forum to discuss issues surrounding what the United States surgeon general calls a vaping epidemic.

“At the very heart of why we are meeting here today is the depth of our concern for youth,” said Steve Francis, director, IPR Center and assistant director of the Global Trade Investigations Division who delivered opening remarks. “We must continue to look for new ways to combat IP criminals, making our highest priority protecting the health and safety of our citizens.”



Dr. Duane Caneva, Department of Homeland Security’s chief medical officer and Michael Hering, director and chief counsel for the Center for Tobacco and Public Health joined Director Francis with opening remarks.

There were four main roundtable sessions that included the state of vaping and e-cigarettes; public health and youth prevention; challenges facing law enforcement agencies; and a FY2020 roadmap to safety. The National Association of Attorneys General, an organization of 56 state and territorial attorneys general in the U.S., was among the participants that also included representatives from the White House Office of the Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, Food and Drug Administration Office of Criminal Investigations, Customs and Border Protection’s National Targeting Center, Department of Justice Consumer Protection Branch, Fraternal Order of Police and local sheriff’s offices.

## U.S., Vietnam sign agreement to expand cooperation on trade facilitation and security



HANOI - The United States has signed a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement (CMAA) with Vietnam to further strengthen bilateral cooperation on security and the facilitation of lawful trade. The agreement, signed by U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Caryn McClelland and Vietnamese Vice Minister of Finance Vũ Thị Mai, will enable the U.S. and Vietnam to more effectively combat terrorism and transnational crime while facilitating increasing volumes of lawful commerce.

The U.S. has now signed 82 CMAAs with other customs administrations around the world, clearing the way for the exchange of information and evidence to assist countries in the enforcement of customs laws, including duty evasion, trafficking, proliferation, money laundering and terrorism-related activities. CMAAs also serve as foundational documents for subsequent information sharing arrangements. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement will implement the agreement on behalf of the U.S.

## IPR Center discusses human trafficking issues with State Department team

The IPR Center hosted a meeting with Department of State Ambassador John Richmond and several senior level colleagues representing the department’s legislative, congressional and foreign affairs offices. The meeting featured a discussion on human trafficking (forced labor and supply chains) and the public-private partnership with Liberty Shared, which aims to prevent human trafficking. Attendees also discussed programs and initiatives of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, an agency within the State Department charged with investigating and creating programs to prevent human trafficking within the United States and internationally.



The IPR Center encourages companies and private industry organizations to help fight (IP) theft and trade law violations by displaying the “Report IP Theft” button on websites that will link users with a form to detail their allegations. For more information on how to obtain this tool, please visit our website: <https://www.iprcenter.gov>.

For more information on these stories, or to submit information for stories in future editions of IPRC Connections, please contact Chuck Jackson, [charles.e.jackson@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:charles.e.jackson@ice.dhs.gov), or (703) 603-3941. In the meantime, you can follow us on Twitter: [@IPRCenter](https://twitter.com/IPRCenter)