TASC talk – Using digital images to identify Smartphone models

By Dr Harin Sellahewa of Buckingham University

Dr Harin Sellahewa, from Buckingham University's computing faculty gave a very interesting and thought provoking talk about how images taken by smartphones and sent to others, for whatever purpose, can be used to identify the manufacturer, make and model and also possibly the exact smart phone which took the image. This work, it is hoped, will one day be used to identify suspects in criminal investigations where smartphone images are used for blackmailing or other illegal purposes.

Harin explained that there are basically 16 different characteristics, from the type of lens to optical sensor specifications, which can be used to define the mobile being used to take the picture. Currently he is working with a number of his students to develop the algorithms necessary to accomplish this. He also showed us how secret messages, including security details can be embedded within an actual picture without it being obvious. So be warned, if you're thinking of taking any naughty photographs and using them for nefarious purposes, don't be so sure that you won't be found out.