

# Security Company to Set Up USC as Safety School

**EDUCATION:** Armorway developed patents through project at university.

A Santa Monica tech company focused on security and birthed at USC has now locked up the school as a customer. **Armorway Inc.**, a security analytics firm co-founded by **Zaré Baghdasarian**, **Manish Jain** and **James Pita** in 2013, has developed a software program that uses game theory to analyze real-time data in an effort to enhance security efforts.

"When you play any game, each of you wants to win," said Jain, Armorway's chief technology officer. "But the outcome depends on what both of you do. We model security on these games."

## TECHNOLOGY

OMAR SHAMOUT



Armorway's platform culls data from sources such as on-site cameras, historical crime records, social media, geolocation information, crowd movement patterns and real-time incident reporting. It then applies an advanced algorithm to generate a security plan based on a customer's specific needs. The plan can be updated on the fly as new data become available.

USC, which has increased security efforts since the 2012 slayings of two Chinese graduate students near campus and a 2014 beating that left a Chinese student dead, has been

using Armorway's service since December.

Baghdasarian and Jain said they had been in discussions with the school about offering their services before those incidents took place.

"The kind of recommendations that we provide are essentially suggestions as to which locations at what times should they send resources to," said Baghdasarian, the company's chief executive.

The co-founders' relationship with USC goes back to 2006, when the school's National Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events received a research grant from the Department of Homeland Security. When the grant ended in 2013, the trio licensed several of the patents that came out of the project to start Armorway.

The five-employee company has not received any outside funding to date, and Baghdasarian said it's on course to generate revenue of \$1 million this year.

Other customers include the U.S. Coast Guard, Los Angeles International Airport and the Federal Air Marshal Service, and Armorway is close to signing up three more, Baghdasarian said.

He added that annual costs for its software range from \$50,000 to \$300,000 depending on a customer's needs.

The company also has plans to expand its software's capability and offer analysis to businesses in the cybersecurity, social marketing and financial auditing sectors.

"The technology has much broader applications," said Jain. "But our current focus is a bit narrower."

## Local hospitality

For the past year, bedding e-tailer **Parachute Home** has been selling its luxury linens to consumers across the country from its Venice headquarters.



Sweet Dreams: Parachute's Ariel Kaye.

Now, the company is expanding its customer base to include hotels, and its first business customer is the new **Hotel Covell**, a boutique inn founded by local hotelier **Dustin Lancaster** that opened its Hollywood Boulevard doors last month.

"As an e-commerce business, we look for other channels," said Parachute founder and Chief Executive **Ariel Kaye**, a former ad executive.

Parachute raised an undisclosed amount of seed funding last March from New York's

Mesa Ventures and Century City's **Queensbridge Venture Partners**, among others. The company's products include a top sheet selling for \$50 and a \$169 duvet cover. Kaye said the company has a seven-figure run rate, a term used to denote projected annual revenue based on monthly sales figures.

Each room at Hotel Covell is designed to represent a different stage in the life of a fictional character, a writer named George Covell. All the sheets and pillowcases in its five themed suites are supplied by Parachute, whose Egyptian cotton products are designed in Los Angeles and manufactured in Italy's Tuscany region.

Though Parachute plans to open a few pop-up stores later this year, Kaye explained that placing her products in hotels is an alternative to opening her own permanent brick-and-mortar store.

She considers it another form of marketing. "For someone to find out about us while sleeping in our product, that's as good as it gets," she said.

## Rebooting

West Hollywood's **Machinima**, a YouTube multichannel network for video-game aficionados, has hired former **Sony Pictures Television Inc.** executive **Jamie Weissenborn** as chief revenue officer. ... **Good Worldwide Inc.**, a media and consulting firm in Mid-Wilshire that focuses on social causes, has brought on **Jeff Dossett** as chief revenue officer. Dossett had served on Good's board since 2008. ... **Damien Retureau** has joined Manhattan Beach travel advertising technology provider **ClickTripz** as managing director for Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

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