

Scientists land Vegas gig

THEY took to the stage in Las Vegas, but for a very different floor show.

Researchers from America's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the National University of Singapore (NUS) landed gigs last week at Caesar's Palace and the Riviera Hotel and Casino to perform live demonstrations of quantum cryptography, theoretically the most secure form of encryption.

Appearing at two major events of the information security industry, known as the Black Hat and Defcon meetings, the researchers showcased the uses of quantum cryptography in sending information safely.

Aptly enough for the City of Lights, NIST said the systems developed by the researchers employ photons – particles of light. These are used to create the secret key, a random series of digital bits, each representing 0 or 1, which is used to encrypt and decrypt messages in real time.

The NIST work, supported by the United States Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency, includes researchers working at the Joint Quantum Institute, a research partnership of NIST and the University of Maryland.

The NUS component was supported by Singapore's Centre for Quantum Technologies and its Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA).