

Cyber Security Policy and Research Institute

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

The Weekly Newsletter of The George Washington University Cyber Security Policy and Research Institute

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Upcoming Events on Campus

**Industry Panel on
Cybersecurity
Preparedness**
Date: February 19, 2015

For more information,
click [here](#).

**Should There Be a
Right to be Forgotten?**
Date: February 20, 2015

For more information,
click [here](#).

**Breakfast and Business
Cards: IT Security**
Date: February 24, 2015

**This event is open to
GW alumni and current
graduate students.*

For more information,
click [here](#).

February 18, 2015

**Fifteen (15) Cyber security Events are
scheduled in the Greater Washington
Area in the next few weeks.**

Announcement

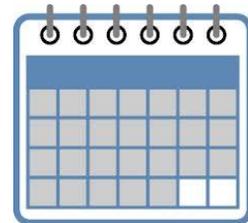
**Thursday, February 19th: Industry Panel
on Cybersecurity Preparedness at GW**

Now in its 9th year, the annual School of Engineering and Applied Science Student Research and Development Showcase creates a venue for SEAS graduate and undergraduate students to present cutting-edge research and compete for top honors and cash prizes. The showcase also presents an opportunity for investors and researchers to learn about opportunities for investing or collaborating on the state-of-the-art research conducted at SEAS.

Traditionally, the competition and showcase have been a one-day event, but to respond to the competition's growth, SEAS is hosting the event over two days this year, Wednesday February 18 and Thursday, February 19. Of particular interest to readers may be the [all-industry panel](#) "Assessing America's Cybersecurity Preparedness" at 3-4 p.m. on Thursday in the Commons area of the new Science and Engineering Hall, 800 22nd St. NW. Panelists include Stephanie von Friedeburg, CIO & VP, Information and Technology Solutions, World Bank Group; Robert Zitz, Senior VP & Chief Systems Architect, Leidos; Roopangi Kadakia, Web Services Executive, NASA; and Anil Katarki, CISO, HP Enterprise Services. Moderating the panel will

Events

See Upcoming
Events at a
Glance



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detailed
descriptions

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be Naeem Hussain, Founder, AgileTrailblazers.
Register to attend
at <http://connect.gwu.edu/site/Calendar?id=106912&view=Detail>



Legislative Lowdown

- Sen. Tom Carper, the top Democrat on the Senate Homeland Security Committee, introduced cybersecurity legislation last week that seeks to increase the sharing of sensitive data between government and the private sector, a push that comes on the heels of President Obama's vocal campaign for such a proposal. "The bill from Sen. Thomas Carper, the top Democrat on the Senate Homeland Security Committee, arrives as hacks on major businesses and financial institutions continue to dominate headlines, and just a week after Anthem insurance announced that account information of as many as 80 million customers had been pilfered," [writes](#) Dustin Volz for the National Journal.

Cyber Security Policy News

New cyber agency announced

President Obama last week went to Silicon Valley to pitch his cybersecurity agenda and issue an executive order to encourage more private sector information sharing. The president announced a new agency to help share information about cyber threats between the government and the private sector. "The agency will be modeled after the National Counter Terrorism Center, which was established after 9/11 to coordinate terrorism intelligence. The lack of such an agency before led to missed opportunities to thwart the 2001 terrorist attacks," [writes](#) Ken Dilanian for the Associated Press. "Lisa Monaco, assistant to the president for [homeland security](#) and counterterrorism, announced the new 'Cyber Threats Intelligence Integration Center' in a speech Tuesday at the Wilson Center in Washington."

But some say the Silicon Valley event fell short of expectations. "Some observers say that, despite commitments made by leading payment card brands to enhance security, the Summit produced no specifics about how public and private sectors will collaborate to curb cyber-fraud," [writes](#) [GovInfoSecurity](#). "They also say the card brands' plans fail to address tokenization concerns that banking/security leaders and retailers have been at odds over for the past several months."

Password security

In his remarks, President Obama admitted to struggling with a major cybersecurity issue: password security. Obama said he has used some passwords that would be pretty easy for cyber criminals to access, including 'Password' and '123457.' "Those are some of my previous passwords. I've changed them since then," Obama said. "The glib comment speaks to a deeper

vulnerability about many people's use of passwords, which are often simplistic and unoriginal,"[reports](#) Julian Hattem at The Hill. "'Password' was the [top password of 2014](#), according to security company SplashData. Second was '123456.' Those weak passwords don't pose much of a challenge to hackers and have made it easier for them to intrude into people's personal or corporate networks."

Facebook launches ThreatExchange

While private industry has been asking lawmakers for more protections from frivolous lawsuits in exchange for sharing more cyber threat information with the federal government, some companies are going it alone. Facebook has launched ThreatExchange, a way for the companies' systems to communicate with one another in real time to share information. The initiative will combine data from a variety of social media companies, including Facebook, Tumblr, and Pinterest, in an effort to stop botnets and malicious software, [writes Wired](#). Cade Metz describes the platform as "a set of application programming interfaces, or APIs, that let disparate companies trade information about the latest online attacks. Built atop [the Facebook Platform](#) -the standard set of tools for coding applications atop the company's worldwide social network-ThreatExchange is already used by Facebook and a handful of other companies, including Tumblr, Pinterest, Twitter, and Yahoo," Metz [writes](#).

NSA has embedded spying software in leading-brand hard drives

The U.S. National Security Agency has figured out how to hide spying software deep within hard drives made by Western Digital, Seagate, Toshiba and other top manufacturers, giving the agency the means to eavesdrop on the majority of the world's computers, according to cyber researchers and former operatives, according to a new report from Kaspersky Lab. "Kaspersky said it found personal computers in 30 countries infected with one or more of the spying programs, with the most infections seen in Iran, followed by Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Mali, Syria, Yemen and Algeria," [reports](#) Joseph Menn at Reuters. "The targets included government and military institutions, telecommunication companies, banks, energy companies, nuclear researchers, media, and Islamic activists."

Another US federal government agency breach

The Defense Contract Management Agency, the U.S. federal government entity responsible for performing contract administration services of the Department of Defense, pulled a number of its internal and external servers offline last week in response to a breach investigation, [reports](#) KrebsOnSecurity.com. Contacted about the outage, DCMA spokesman David Wray said suspicious activity was detected on a DCMA public-facing server January 28, resulting in an ongoing investigation.

About this Newsletter

This newsletter is a weekly summary of events related to cyber security policy and research, with a special focus on developments and events in the Washington, DC area. It is published by the Cyber Security Policy and Research Institute (CSPRI) of the George Washington University. CSPRI is a center for GW and the Washington area that promotes technical research and policy analysis of topics in or related to cybersecurity. More information is available at our website, <http://www.cspri.seas.gwu.edu>

CSPRI

[202 994 5613](tel:2029945613), cspri@gwu.edu

Tompkins Hall, Suite 106

725 23rd Street NW

Washington DC, DC 20052