

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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Vacation Notice

CSPRI will not publish a newsletter on December 22 or December 29 of this year.

We will resume regular newsletters on January 5, 2015.

Enjoy the holiday season!

December 15, 2014

Five (5) Cyber security Events are scheduled in the Greater Washington Area in the next few weeks.

Event Announcement

STUDENTS: Apply now for full scholarships in Cybersecurity! Deadline January 31, 2015. Details [here](#).



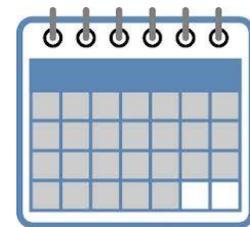
Legislative Lowdown

-Lawmakers finally got busy on cyber legislation this past week, albeit not necessarily on the most controversial cyber bills. Lawmakers have sent a raft of cyber legislation to President Barack Obama's desk, breaking through a six-year logjam. No doubt congressional action was spurred on by escalating intrusions into

Events

Click [here](#) for descriptions of the upcoming events!

Click the Calendar to See Upcoming Events at a Glance!



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government and contractor networks," [writes](#) Aliya Sternstein for NextGov. "In a move backed by the White House, but not necessarily all Pentagon hawks, each of the measures positions the Department of Homeland Security as head of governmentwide cyber operations."

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Allan Friedman:
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One of those measures calls for an update to the more than decade-old Federal Information Security Management Act, or FISMA. The [bill](#) mandates "automated security tools to continuously diagnose and improve security." In addition, it deputizes DHS to oversee governmentwide cybersecurity operations.

The Senate passed a bill from Sen. Jay Rockefeller that would codify the development of the voluntary NIST Cybersecurity Framework. The Hill [reports](#) that the bill, S. 1353, the Cybersecurity Act, permits the secretary of Commerce to develop voluntary standards to reduce cyber risks to critical infrastructure, such as power grids.

As GovInfoSecurity reports, the NIST bill also authorizes the federal government to support cybersecurity research, raise public awareness of cyber-risks and improve the nation's cybersecurity workforce. "However, the legislation provides no funding for these initiatives," Eric Chabrow [observes](#). "Separate authorization bills would need to be enacted to pay for the programs authorized by the act."

Also clearing the House last week were the [National Cybersecurity Protection Act](#) and the [Cybersecurity Workforce Assessment Act](#).

Cyber Security Policy News

Bulk collection of phone records: update

-A federal court has renewed an order allowing the government to continue unchecked its bulk collection of Americans' phone records, a decision that comes nearly a year after President Obama promised to end the spying program in its current state, writes the National Journal. "The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court approved last week the Justice Department's request for another 90-day extension of the National Security Agency's most controversial surveillance program, which was publicly exposed last summer by Edward Snowden," [reports](#) Dustin Volz. "The spying authority is next set to expire on Feb. 27, 2015. The extension, announced Monday, is the fourth of its kind since President Obama pledged in January to reform how the NSA spies on U.S. citizens."

More on the Sony Pictures cyber attack

-The cyber attack that hit Sony Pictures two

weeks ago was a sophisticated operation - so sophisticated, officials say, that the same attack could have made it through the defenses of almost any large organization, including the ones currently deployed by federal agencies, [writes](#) Jared Serbu for Federal News Radio.

Over the weekend, attorneys for Sony Pictures [sent](#) threatening letters to more than two dozen media outlets and reporters, advising them that writing about the extent of the attack in detail could result in lawsuits. Writing for The Washington Post, UCLA law professor Eugene Volokh [said](#) Sony "probably" doesn't have a legal leg to stand on in making such demands - although he concedes that there are a few notable exceptions to this conclusion.

New initiative: bringing computer science to the middle school and high school levels

-The White House announced Monday a new initiative to teach computer science to middle school and high school students, with about 60 school districts nationwide participating, Ars Technica reports. "While no one is born a computer scientist, becoming a computer scientist isn't as scary as it sounds," President Barack Obama said in a [video message](#) Monday. "With hard work and a little math and science, anyone can do it."

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>

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