



SWISS CYBER STORM

Press Release

Discovering the Top Young Swiss Master Hackers

Things got serious for the 17 best young cyber talents last weekend: they met at the Swiss finals of the European Cyber Security Challenge 2015 in Sursee to compete against one another in various disciplines related to IT security. The competition established a team of the 10 best young hackers in Switzerland. They will form the Swiss national delegation for the European Cyber Security Challenge, competing against teams from five other European countries.

Bern September 14th, 2015 – young hackers met at Campus Sursee 17 from Friday and Sunday to infiltrate secured computer systems. It sounds like a scene from a movie – but that was the setting at the Swiss finals of this year’s Cyber Security Challenge. These high school and college-age students aren’t criminals; they’re the best up-and-coming talents in the IT security sector.

The Road to the International Finals

The young hackers had to battle a deadline to find security vulnerabilities in web applications, crack encrypted documents, or gain access to a protected system. They weren’t just being evaluated on their technical skills: soft skills like their ability to work on a team or their presentation style were also part of their overall ratings. “It’s not enough to simply find security problems. Working out a solution as a team and being able to communicate with others is just as important for a ‘good hacker,’” explained Ivan Bütler – jury member and owner of an IT security company.

That’s why the winning team isn’t just made up of the best technical masterminds; it also includes members with excellent social skills. These ten young talents make up the Swiss delegation for the European finals, which will take place at the KKL Luzern on October 21st. There, the young team will need to prove its skills against teams from Germany, Austria, England, Spain, and Romania.

Hacking – a unique hobby

One requirement for participants is that they have not completed any higher education degree in computer science. This means the participants acquired the majority of their knowledge in their free time. “My computer science training did give me a good basis, but a sound knowledge of IT security requires lots of extra engagement. Even now, I spend a large amount of my free time on independent study,” 23 year-old finalist Christian Rybovic explained. Christian is currently going into business for himself by starting an online shop.



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Hacking as a recreational activity is on the rise: “When we had the first competition three years ago, we had trouble finding enough participants. This year, more than 200 people signed up for the online qualification process,” explained Bernhard Tellenbach, president of Swiss Cyber Storm, the association running the competition.

Companies and the public sector both profit from this trend as well: the young hackers acquire additional skills while learning their hobby that are in high demand on the job market. “With increasing digitalization, information security considerations are becoming more and more important. Organizations rely on specialists who know criminal hackers’ methods. That’s the only way to reliably secure systems and repel attacks,” Tellenbach explained. This also explains the success of the Cyber Security Challenge, which was supported this year by the federal government and prominent private companies.

Contact

Bernhard Tellenbach, President of Swiss Cyber Storm
president@swisscyberstorm.com, +41 76 442 20 42

Swiss Cyber Storm Club

The association Swiss Cyber Storm was founded in 2012 as a non-profit organization with the purpose to promote young cybersecurity talent and regularly carry out cyber security specialist events for professionals and executives.

The purpose of the association Swiss Cyber Storm is met, on the one hand, the exploration and production of young cybersecurity talents within the framework of the annual Cybersecurity Challenge and related participation in the European Cyber Security Challenge. On the other hand, the association conducts the annual international conference of cyber-attacks and defense, Swiss Cyber Storm.

The association is committed at both the national and international levels for the promotion of young talent and strives together with partner associations to extend the European Cyber Security Challenges to other participating countries.

The association is not a members club in the strict sense, in that it does not seek to have a large number of members. The association is composed of members who support the purposes of the association by active participation and by representing the interests of business and the public sector as well as the teaching and research.