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# Bangalore: Ethics matter, just for the hack of it

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File Photo DNA

It's all about participating in hackathons and starting **hackers (/topic/hackers)** clubs. **Engineering students (/topic/engineering-students)** in the city seem gung ho about ethical hacking and cyber security. Not only do they want to participate in hacking events and explore the field, but also pursue cyber security as a future career option.

"There is tremendous scope in this segment," say Adithya Naresh and Yogesh S, students from the Amrita School of Engineering.

The boys have started a hackers club in their college, called Hacs (Hackers for Applied Cyber Security).

"The objective is to expose our classmates and juniors to the scope of cyber security and create awareness. We also intend to hold a techfest in this segment early next year," say Adithya and Yogesh.

Both have been getting exposed to hackathons for the past few months along with their college mates like Movnavinothan V and Reno Robert, a masters student in cyber security.

"Hackathons allow us to apply all that we have learnt to practical situations, also (to) hone our skills," says Robert.

Padmini S, a third-year computer science student, who had recently participated in a women's hackathon, says working alongside techies and professionals while still a student "provides lot of exposure."

"The networking and interactions with professionals proves beneficial while starting my career," says Padmini.

Prabhakaran, associate professor and security consultant, Amrita Centre for Cyber Security, says they have started a cyber security centre. "Encouragement is needed for students to take part in ethical hacking events."

### Job prospects

Students are looking at a long-term future in this field. "After course completion, we want to be security researchers," say Adithya and Yogesh.

With starting salaries ranging from Rs 4-5 lakh per annum, slightly higher than the Rs 3-3.5 lakh offered for regular IT jobs, "the potential is surely there".

Prabhakaran says the demand for jobs is coming from banks, financial services, software development companies, "who all need cyber security."

According to a study by EC-Council, a global certification body for information security professionals, about 86% of the student IT talent pool in **India (/topic/india)** is unaware of cyber security basics.

Sarv Saravanan, senior VP and GM, EMC centres of excellence, **Asia (/topic/asia)** Pacific and Japan, says what is most needed is professionals with an offensive mindset "adept at evaluating external intelligence, tweaking security data models and finding new ways to identify inbound threats."

### Need for ethical hacking & cyber security

India faces 1,200 phishing attacks each month. While globally, 1.25 lakh phishing attacks were identified in the third quarter of 2013. Losses due to phishing globally were around \$1.66 billion.

Taking serious steps towards setting up a strong cyber security strategy, the central **government (/topic/government)** in July, declared its first National Cyber Security Policy, aimed at creating five lakhs professionals by 2015.

Currently, there are only about 556 trained cyber security personnel in the government sector, as per KPMG estimates. This is minuscule compared with the 1.25 lakh in China, and 91,080 in the US.

**What's phishing?**

Phishing is the act of attempting to acquire information such as usernames, passwords, credit card details by masking as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication. Communications from social websites, auction sites, banks, online payment processors are commonly used to lure unsuspecting public.

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