University and college campus electronic security presents special problems for information assurance (IA) specialists. The culture of academia is not inherently supportive of restrictions on access to knowledge and information compartmentalization. Academic institutions have faced legal challenges over violations of intellectual property rights by students and faculty. In many institutions, security policies are weak or vague because of control by faculty members who have limited understanding and less interest in security. Even where there are policies in place, academic information security officers constantly face challenges from innovative and rebellious members of their communities who find technical ways of getting around technical barriers intended to maintain those security policies.

Dartmouth College, in Hanover, New Hampshire, has a history of computing that dates to a demonstration of remote computer access over telephone lines by Bell Labs’ George Stibitz in 1940, through the creation of the BASIC computer language by former professors John Kemeny and Thomas Kurtz in the 1960s (Dr Kurtz was one of my PhD examiners in 1976), to the present as one of the first campuses to offer ubiquitous wireless network access.

Dartmouth College will host its second conference on Securing the eCampus: Building a Culture of Information Security in an Academic Institution November 11-12, 2008. Focusing on the unique challenges of cyber security in academia, the conference welcomes CIOs, CISOs, and other academic IT leaders to discuss and explore what it takes to develop a more secure information environment on college campuses. This workshop is co-sponsored by Dartmouth’s Institute for Security, Technology, and Society and Dartmouth’s Computing Services Department.

Ellen Waite-Franzen, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer at Dartmouth and a co-host of the event, notes: “When I started in this business, we all knew that computing technology was exciting, fast-moving, and sometimes risky. But the risks 10 years ago were nothing like the exposures we face today. Today, the lives of our institutions depend on network services at every single level, and it’s critical to constantly review security best practices and consult with our colleagues to maintain the computing trust of our constituents.”
Professor Denise Anthony, <http://www.ists.dartmouth.edu/people/faculty/anthony.html> Research Director of the Institute for Security, Technology, and Society, chair of the Sociology Department, and the other co-host of the conference agrees, adding, “Computing is a topic and a theme that intersects every academic and administrative department on a college campus. Recognizing computing as the collective resource that it is can help to ensure that we work cooperatively to address not only our individual needs, but also to share information and work together to address security and privacy issues that challenge us all.”

The 2008 program was developed considering comments from last year’s event. The first day of the conference, Tuesday the 11th of November, will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/lebcy-courtyard-hanover-lebanon/> in nearby Lebanon, NH <http://www.lebcity.com/public_documents/index>, and will feature presentations from academic, industry, and journalist IT leaders who will discuss a variety of topics including:

- IT and the current campus environment
- Emerging trends and the future of information security
- Getting executive support for security programs
- Tensions between securing against legal pressure (i.e., copyright complaints, CALEA, and so on) and maintaining an open environment
- Developing an information security awareness program

Day two will be held on the Dartmouth campus on Wednesday the 12th of November and will feature several sessions including:

- Building a Security Operations Center
- Emerging trends regarding digital investigation and how they might impact incident response preparedness
- Authenticating remote learners (a panel I’ll be leading that I’m calling “On the Internet, No One Knows You’re a Dog” <http://weblogs.mozillazine.org/gerv/archives/2007/images/internet_dog.jpg> )
- Developing an information security course

For the detailed agenda, speaker bios, and registration information, please visit the conference website. <http://www.dartmouth.edu/comp/about/conferences/security/>

I hope to see you there – do say hello if you can attend.

* * *

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