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Cyber security career for all majors

Winona Rajamohan Nov 15, 2018

Tapping into the growing needs of the technological industry, CyberAwareness Day 2018 was held in the Student Union yesterday with the goal of allowing students to explore extensive opportunities in the cybersecurity field.

San Jose State University is recognized by the National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security as a Center of Academic Excellence, and this effort is a part of National Cybersecurity Career Awareness Week.

“The event focuses on the cyber career aspects ... global demands for cyber professionals far exceed supply,” Alan Wong, director of business development and external relations said.

Hosted by SJSU in partnership with UC Merced, the event began with a webcast from Merced by keynote speaker Lily Yeoh, the founder and CEO of CyberOne Security.

Yeoh studied biology and chemistry in her undergraduate years and earned a graduate degree in management information systems, reiterating an important point that the event wished to instill in students - a career in cybersecurity can

be for anyone.

“We want to highlight to students that there is a high demand in the industry which actually ranges from not just a computer science or engineering kind of major but it needs a lot of people who are non-technological practices,” Wong said.

Mitchel Chang, a member of the panel, shared about his role as the senior vice president of corporate social responsibility and outreach at Trend Micro – a leading company in hybrid cloud security, network defense, small business security, and endpoint security.

“We’re trying to help universities with career development, our curriculum development, and some joint research projects to help universities be better prepared in their curriculum to train cybersecurity professionals,” Chang said.

Students from the justice studies department were invited to the event as a result of the intersectionalities currently present between the justice system and the need for defense in a digital space.

In an effort to promote the idea of digital hygiene among students in a technological climate where phishing attempts are constantly being fought by businesses and academic institutes, three community colleges – San Jose City, Foothill and De Anza – were also invited, Wong said.

For electrical engineering graduate student Namratha Murthy, security is an important aspect that needs to be paid attention to because of the immense threat that can be imposed when a database is in the hands of the wrong people.

“Security breaches cannot be completely avoided because once you come up with a new security tool to avoid an attack there’ll always be someone waiting to deploy an attack again,” Murthy said. “The future should focus on probably trying to concentrate on these types of attacks and trying to avoid them.”

According to Yeoh, non-technological roles in the cybersecurity field include roles in education, human resources, project management, media, and communications as well as legal work among many others.

“I always thought cybersecurity was just one thing about protecting businesses or basically just fighting off potential threats, but there’s a lot more that goes into it so [the event] just broadened my knowledge,” computer engineering sophomore Jason Chong said.

More than 1.8 million cyber security professionals will be required in the field to accommodate a predicted global shortfall by 2022, according to the 2017 study by IT organization (ISC)².

The organizations’ 2018 report relays data showing that one of the biggest career progression challenges in the field are unclear career paths to cybersecurity roles.

“This is an event that introduces the cybersecurity area through industry people; what kind of cybersecurity area they’re working in, what kind of mindset they have about cybersecurity so that’s a great opportunity for students who want to pursue this career,” Younghee Park, assistant professor at the college of engineering said.