



Bsides Leeds 2023

On 24th June 2023 I attended Bsides Leeds, a community driven Information Security Conference. Below is a summary of my experience on the day, although it doesn't cover everything that Bsides Leeds had to offer as there was so much going on.

First of all, there were Opening Remarks from the organisers, followed by the first speaker Holly Grace Williams with the Red Team Keynote. This was about pen testing and provided lots of useful advice to ensure you get the best out of it. Such as making sure the work done on results from vulnerability scans is focussed on the vulnerabilities that area relevant to the organisation.

Andy Gill was up next with a talk titled 'Pen tests the Jason Bourne Approach'. This was a compilation of recollections from 'one time on a pen test'. Despite sounding like these events could be in a movie he is not, in fact, Jason Bourne. He is however an experienced offensive security consultant with some very interesting tales to tell.



After Andy's talk, I took a little break to peruse the vendor stalls and check out the villages. There's lock picking, Battle Bots and Car Hacking to have a go at. There's also a BBC Master computer displaying digital photos, a Sticker Stall selling a variety of stickers and other merchandise for charity and a scavenger hunt to check out.



Time for another talk and I chose to check out Peter Jones and his presentation on Practical Blue Teaming which was about what his role as a CISO entails. Apparently, there's a lot of meetings. Peter also gave some tips on being a successful Blue Team and the skills that are required for that.

Next up was James Bore with a talk on The Business Philosophy of Security. This was an interactive session discussing what part Shareholders and Directors play in a business and what a more secure company is more free to do.

Time for lunch for me then. There were two lunch sessions so plenty of time for everyone to sample the delicious food which provided a midday energy boost. It was also time for some more attempts at earning points in the scavenger hunt, to pick up some Vendor swag and to pay a visit to the Sticker Stall, which was raising money for The Cyber Helpline.

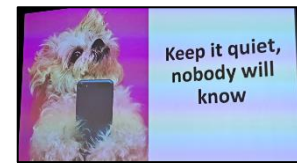


After lunch I watched Sean Wright give the talk 'Docker to the Security' which unsurprisingly was about Docker Security. Sean kindly made available all the Docker images in the demo here:

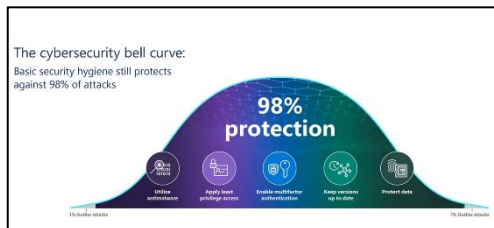
<https://github.com/SeanWrightSec/Docker-to-the-Security>

Next up Lorna Armitage with 'Chat GPT and the benefits for Cyber Security'. Near the end of the talk Lorna fessed up that up to that point the talk had been created by ChatGPT. It was very difficult to identify that was the case without being told.

Another Keynote next which was presented by Lisa Forte. In this Blue Team keynote Lisa talked about when she is helping companies prepare for a cyber attack she often sees a lot of decisions that could be described by the quote 'often wrong, never in doubt'. These are decisions made by intuition which. despite not using data, advice, playbooks or following best practice, the decision maker is confident it will work. Lisa then went on to talk about the mistakes companies sometimes make in ransomware situations.

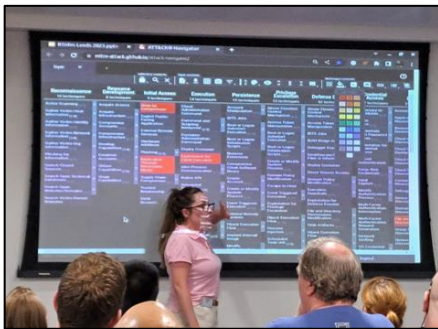


Next there was a very useful presentation by Rael Sasiak-Rushby on 'Who's input is it anyway'. This was full of tips on how to be successful with Security Champions as they help to spread the load of responsibility for security.



Following that was Sarah Young with 'Fantastic Cloud Security Mistakes' accompanied by flying Tim Tams. Sarah told us that if we do the basic stuff we're 98% protected according to the Microsoft CyberSecurity Bell Curve report.

A little break and time to catch up with other attendees before the final Keynote.

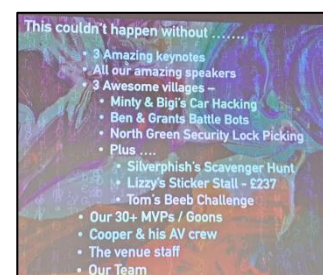


The final presentation of the day was Eliza May Austin with the Purple Team Keynote. This started with explaining how you may want to secure the contents of your fridge while someone else may want to acquire the contents of your wardrobe. Referencing things most people have was an excellent way to communicate to a room full of people from all walks of life with all kinds of different job roles how to assess what it is that you want to protect. This was then linked to the MITRE ATT&CK Framework which is a knowledge base of tactics and techniques which can be used to understand adversary behaviour.

That may have been the end of the talks but not the end of the day. Next up was a panel discussion with Samantha Humphries, Holly Grace Williams, Dr Andrea Cullen, and Niall Clarke. Questions posed to the panellists were 'what's your worst war story', what would be a silver bullet for Cyber Security' and 'What would you like to see more or less of in the community'.



Then it was the end of the day and time for Closing Remarks. The organisers took front stage to thank all those involved. It wasn't over though. There was still the afterparty to go to. Time to catch up with others and chat about the day which was a fantastic day.



Talks can be viewed on the Bsides Leeds Youtube channel here

<https://www.youtube.com/@bsidesleeds1246>