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Si430

27 February 2025

Geeks

While most of cyber security tends to focus on the black hat side of the spectrum, it is important to realize that there is a light side to the cyber security domain comprised of well intentioned geeks. These white hat hackers focus on what is called bug hunting. Black hat hackers also do bug hunting, but they search for bugs in the hopes of being able to exploit them for profit and gain. White hat hackers bug hunt in order to patch those bugs to prevent any potential intrusion. It is a constant game of cat and mouse, where exploits become more and more sophisticated, and security measures and patches also become more sophisticated in the process. This game of red team versus blue team highlights how cyber can manifest itself as another frontier of conflict.

However, there is more than just a red team and a blue team involved in this battle. There is a middle ground often called gray hat hackers, who straddle the boundaries of ethics and morals when conducting cyber operations. Among this cohort includes what are known as hacktivist. These people use their skills to push an agenda. As by their title of gray hat hackers, their actions can at times be morally questionable, but have also been used to take down illegal websites that host content containing child sex abuse (CSA). Since these people are often not part of any governing agency, their rules of engagement often rely on the will of the hacktivist group. But regardless of whether they lean more to the white side or black side of the cyber domain, they are an integral part that won’t go away anytime soon.

Furthermore, outside of the traditional players of the white, gray, and black hat hackers, whistle blowers have also taken advantage of cyber to further their goals. Due to anonymity, whistle blowers can leak sensitive information from the comfort of their own home, and mitigate retribution through the obfuscation of their online identity. These whistle blowers rely on their online anonymity to shield them from their oppressive government and any agencies who might seek to get even. Overall, as time goes on, the number and types of players in the cyber realm will only continue to expand, and white, gray, and black hackers along with whistle blowers will only be a few of the many different faces we see on the internet.