DEFENSE DIGITAL SERVICE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The U.S. Defense Digital Service and the Department of the Air Force Announce Bricks in the Air, an Avionics Hacking Workshop built with LEGO® Bricks in the Aerospace Village for DEF CON 28 Safe Mode

WASHINGTON – July 28, 2020 – Bricks in the Air, designed and developed by the Defense Digital Service (DDS) in partnership with the Department of the Air Force, is a four bay avionics hacking workshop for beginners taking place in the Aerospace Village at the first-ever virtual DEF CON 28 Safe Mode from Aug 6-9, 2020. First introduced at DEF CON 27 (2019) by the DDS team, Bricks in the Air is built with LEGO® Bricks' Technic series and engineered by DDS to allow players to simulate hacking airplanes to expose, and subsequently secure, vulnerabilities. These workshops are meant to be educational and the U.S. Government does not condone hacking for malicious gain.

"When it comes to securing DoD's most critical assets, we invite hackers because they think like hackers," says Brett Goldstein, Director of the Defense Digital Service. "Nefarious hackers don't abide by a 'security checklist' or 'playbook.' Their approach is fluid, unpredictable, and the best way to be prepared for such attacks in aviation is to flip the script on how the DoD thinks about security."

Since DEF CON is now in Safe Mode due to COVID-19, all 4 DDS and USAF workshops will be conducted virtually at dds-virtual.com. Participation in the Bricks in the Air workshop will be open from Aug 6, 2020 to August 9, 2020, and players will need a Twitch account to participate. The workshop consists of four simulated airplanes in four bays: 1) Mad Props, a cargo airplane, 2) Huey Lewis and The Views, a heavy-lift helicopter, 3) Spinderella, a rescue helicopter, and 4) Hella Props, a heavy-lift helicopter. In addition to the Bricks in the Air avionics workshop, DDS and the USAF are also hosting two satellite hacking workshops, CPX SimpleSat, and DDSat-1, in addition to the ground station hacking workshop, Nyan-Sat, developed with Red Balloon Security. The first 500 players to complete one of the Bricks in the Air, CPX SimpleSat, or DDSat-1 challenges will receive a "Bricks in the Air" DEF CON t-shirt.

"Space is the final frontier for cybersecurity. It's imperative we work with experienced ethical hackers, as well as inspire a new generation to pursue STEM, to keep space free and secure for commerce and exploration," says Dr. Roper, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. "We believe this is best achieved through collaboration with communities like DEF CON."

This and other workshops are the hands-on learning part of Space Security Challenge 2020: Hack-A-Sat, a joint effort by the U.S. Defense Digital Service and the Department of the Air Force. The Hack-A-Sat Capture the Flag (CTF), a multi-stage challenge for more advanced security researchers, kicked off in late May with a qualification event that hosted over 2,000 teams from around the world. Eight of the most talented teams have been invited to the Hack-A-Sat final event taking place virtually Aug 7-9 on hackasat.com. Together, the Hack-A-Sat CTF and the educational workshops contribute to the Aerospace Village's mission of building an inclusive community of next-generation aerospace cybersecurity expertise and leaders.

For more information about the Bricks in the Air avionics hacking workshop or the three aerospace hacking workshops, CPX-SimpleSat, DDSat-1, and Nyan-Sat, visit dds.mil/defcon/ or to check out the Hack-A-Sat CTF final event, visit www.hackasat.com.

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About Defense Digital Service (DDS)
The Defense Digital Service was established by the Secretary of Defense in November 2015 as a SWAT team of nerds that provides the best in modern technical knowledge designed to bolster national defense. We are primarily based in the Pentagon, but we also have satellite offices in Augusta, Georgia, and co-located at the Defense Innovation Unit in Mountain View, California. Our range of talent includes world-class software developers, designers, product managers, digital experts, and bureaucracy hackers from both the private sector and within government. Learn more at https://dds.mil/.

About Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL)
The Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) is the primary scientific research and development center for the Department of the Air Force. AFRL plays an integral role in leading the discovery, development, and integration of affordable warfighting technologies for our air, space, and cyberspace force. With a workforce of more than 11,000 across nine technology areas and 40 other operations across the globe, AFRL provides a diverse portfolio of science and technology ranging from fundamental to advanced research and technology development. For more information, visit www.afresearchlab.com.

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