

The Youth and Cyberspace



International Youth Day isn't just about merely celebrating the youth and our achievements. It's about celebrating the culture, impact, and uncertain terrains young people face every day in an ever-changing world. And what place changes quicker than the Internet?

The World Wide Web is the largest network ever in human history. It connects people, organisations, governments, and the infrastructure each of these entities depend on. You've never been closer to a stranger, than when your network provider messes up and you're both ranting on Twitter (cough...MTN).

Due to the nature of the Internet, and its importance in our lives, it has become a target for criminals that love computers, also known as hackers. Today, we'll take a look at the impact young hackers have brought to the world. From the absolutely devious, to the heroes, to the little geniuses. Without further ado, let's begin.

James Kosta

A currently renowned hacker, **James** had quite the upbringing. He and his partners hacked into major business and military computer systems, targeting companies like banks, General Electric, and IBM. He was convicted at 14 for multiple counts of technical burglary, leading to a 45-year prison sentence. In a

twist of fate, he chose to join the Navy at 18 and later became an intelligence analyst for the CIA at 20, focusing on tracking warlords in Africa and the Middle East. Today, he mentors troubled youth, helping them unleash their potential, and also gives TED talks.

Matthew Weigman

When he was just 14, a blind **Weigman** used his amazing hearing skills to trick phone operators and mimic in-band phone signals. He became a famous phone phreaker, pulling pranks like swatting on his rivals by imitating different phone line operators. He got caught at 18 for crimes he committed at 17. He was released in 2018, but not much has been heard of him ever since.

Lapsus\$

Although just a group of teenagers, **Lapsus\$** hit Microsoft, Nvidia, Uber, Samsung, Ubisoft, and Rockstar Games with cyberattacks. Despite how high profile the cases were, Lapsus\$ were always considered script kiddies, rather than a dangerous threat group. In March 2022 however, their luck ran out when 7 alleged members between the ages of 16 and 21 were arrested during an investigation of the cases.

Reuben Paul

Reuben is a young prodigy, already making waves at the tender age of 10. He's an ethical hacker with a sharp focus on the security of mobile phones. During a conference, Reuben confidently took the stage and in a matter of minutes, he showed everyone how a hacker could effortlessly snatch critical data. It was a moment that left everyone in awe, and it's just a glimpse of the incredible potential that Reuben holds in the world of ethical hacking.

Betsy Davies

Betsy might only be 8 years old, but she managed to crack a public Wi-Fi network with a simple tutorial. Her feat raised a storm, shedding light on the risks of using public Wi-Fi. The VPN provider "Hide My Ass" (Not our words), recognized her skills and teamed up with her for an experiment. The joint effort aimed to increase public awareness by demonstrating how effortlessly someone could breach these networks.

Kristoffer Von Hassel

At just 5 years old, child prodigy **Kristoffer** amazed his parents by playing Xbox after finding a clever backdoor to his account. His dad, a cloud service security engineer, was shocked. Reporting the issue to Microsoft, Kristoffer earned \$50, 4 games, and a free subscription to Xbox Live. He's now an official security researcher for Microsoft and even has a Wikipedia page to his name.

Conclusion

Each of these people have made an impact in the world today, for better or worse. As a youth-led organization, we at CYSED encourage our peers and people of all ages to join us in creating a legacy for good, and a penchant for making the world a safer place for everyone. Happy International Youth Day!

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