Justin Schwarz

The CCDC (Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition) helps to show the importance of computer security in today’s business environment. It helps to identify the type of control a hacker threat could possibly take if they were given the opportunity. Not only do these kinds of competitions help to emphasize the possible threat but they also help those of us attending to network with professionals in our field. The point of the competition is to protect, to the best of your ability, a network that is vulnerable to attack. These networks have anything from backdoors to cronjobs that allow the “red team” to get a connection.

Many of the vulnerabilities found were easily discovered by our team. One of the things that we believe hurt our score was the red team getting into our user base because our AD users did not have their passwords changed. That type of vulnerability will not be overlooked as easily next time. This just went to show that all vulnerabilities are not as, well hidden, as some might think.

One thing that I think stood out particularly to me, at least, was the shear amount of literature on the subject. Not only are there a lot of books and web pages about network security, but not all of them even say the same thing. Some of the Windows books give you examples of services to kill and then another book tells you to stop a totally different set of services. It just goes to show that there isn’t just one really concrete answer to security.

Finally, after talking to our advisor, Dr. Doyle, I found that it wasn’t out of the question to actually bring the security cognate for Informatics to IUS if we can find the people for it. We need to find not only about 15 students and a few faculty members to help teach the subject. It would also require that we find a way to fund this endeavor.

It was a great experience and I hope to participate next year and hopefully make it to the Regional CCDC if not National.