

# How [not] to suck at CTF



**OWASP**  
Open Web Application  
Security Project

Olivier Bilodeau

# Warning

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You are about to enter a mystical universe filled with inconsistencies and various types of abuse.

You have been warned.



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# CENTAURICORN

The galaxy's greatest warrior

# Avertissement

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Présentation surchargée d'anglicismes!



# Avertissement

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- Stressez pas à prendre des notes de tools, y'a pas de contenu pertinent dans cette présentation.

# \$ whoami

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- Cybersecurity Researcher at GoSecure
- Co-founder MontréHack (hands-on security workshops)
- VP Training and Hacker Jeopardy at NorthSec



# CTF Experience

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I'm off the Previous Generation of CTF players

- Founder Amish Security
- Founder CISSP Groupies



# Anonymous

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# Troll

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# Monocle

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# Nyan cat

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# Grognons

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# Cuir cuir cuir moustache

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un CTF c'est quoi?

CTF ⇒ Capture The  
Flags

# Non pas comme ça...

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QUAKE  LIVE

# Plutôt comme ça

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# Dans les faits ce sont...

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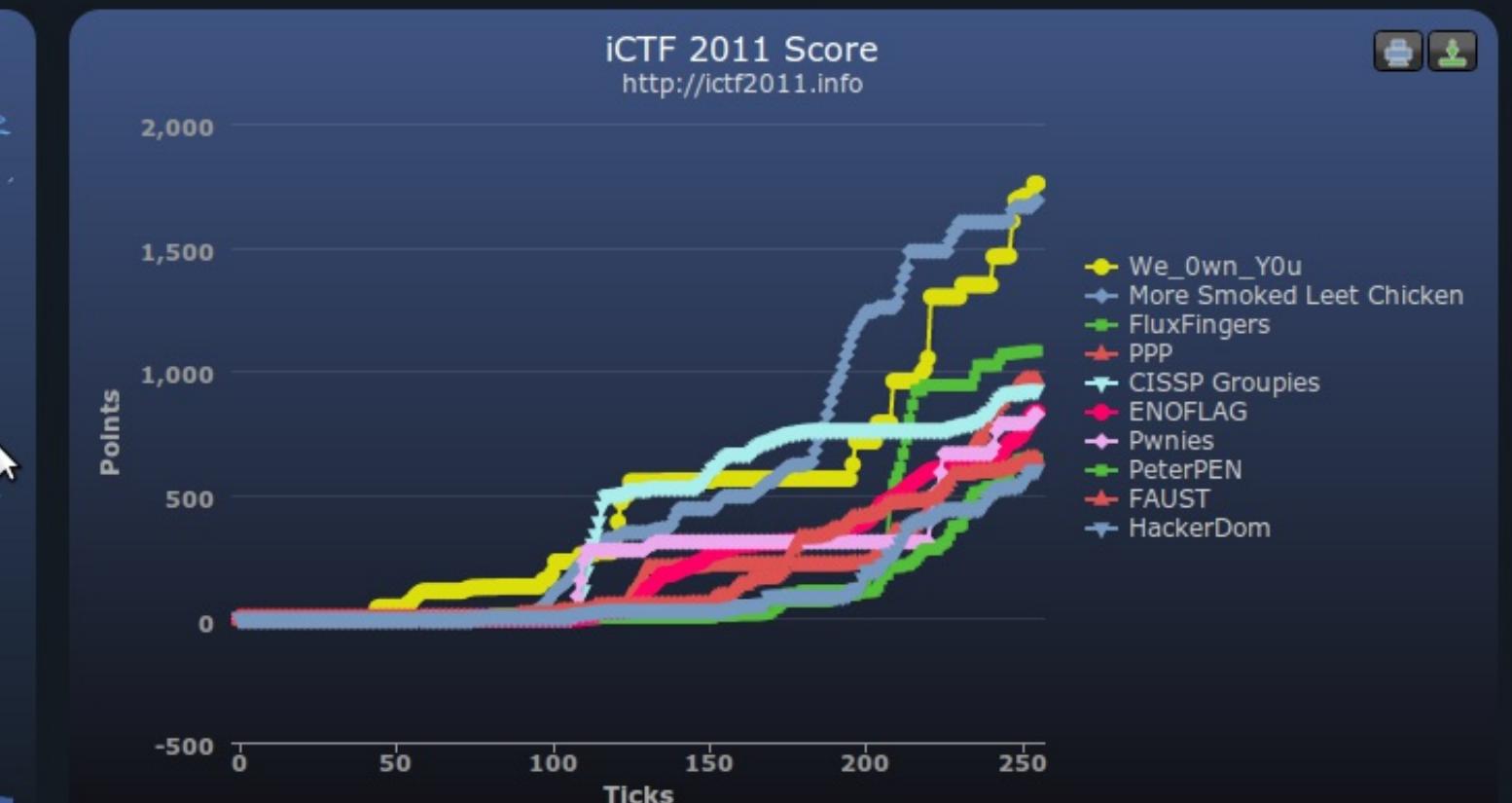
- hacking games
- hacking puzzles
- computer science puzzle
- nerd puzzles

**Myth: CTF are about  
information security**

# comment ça marche?

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- des gens créatifs et généreux font des scénarios et défis
- les participants arrivent (ou se loggent)
- on cherche des flags
- on soumet les flags à un système de pointage



# Les "fameux" flags

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- parfois sous la forme FLAG:abcdefg...
- sinon {FLAG:...}
- ou encore The flag is: abcdefgh...
- ou juste: 112f3a99b283a4e1788dedd8eo5d35375c33747
- ou même: ceciestunfantastiqueflag
- mais après ont les voit partout!

*La vie est un CTF*

— Benjamin Vanheuverzwijn

# Pourquoi participer?

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- apprendre!
- sortir de sa zone de confort, constamment!
- se trouver une job le fun
- trouver du talent passionné
- les contacts

*Plus de la moitié des chercheurs dans notre équipe ont été rencontrés dans des compétitions de type "CTF". Le contexte de compétition nous permet rapidement de voir les compétences techniques et sociales d'un candidat. ...*

*Plusieurs de nos chercheurs ont des problèmes de comportement et de consommation d'alcool mais c'est tout de même grâce à eux que nous pouvons nous vanter d'avoir la meilleure équipe de recherche en sécurité au Québec.*

— Pierre-Marc Bureau en 2013 chez ESET Canada



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# Variantes

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- Cyberwar (managed, unmanaged)
- Red vs Blue
- Jeopardy board
- Javascript-RPG
- Batshit insane (iCTF)
- ...

# Jeopardy Board

6/15/2013 2:38:32 AM >private< Your teammate SPACEBAR solved pieceofeight [OMGACM] for 1 points.  
6/15/2013 2:11:09 AM <global> PPP solved diehard [OMGACM] for 2 points.  
6/15/2013 12:26:50 AM <global> blue-lotus solved pieceofeight [OMGACM] for 1 points.  
6/14/2013 11:37:38 PM <global> FIRST BLOOD: PPP scores first on bitterswallow!!!!!!  
Congratulations.

3dub	0x41414141	\xFF\xe4\xcc	OMGACM	gnireenigne
1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5

40:49:16 left

PPP	4
European NOPSled Team	3
CHROOT	3
Robot Mafia	3
The Cat is #1!!	3
NC7U75	3
9447	3
ScoobySnacks	3
Men in Black Hats	2
Routards	2
WHAT_Mafia	2
KAIST GoN	2
hack-stuff	2
Shellphish	1
Neg9	1
dc949	1
TwoSixNine	1
lucha 0day	1
Stratum 0	1
Root Overload Troop '13	1
SomeRandomName	1
<b>CISSP Groupies</b>	<b>1</b>
sutegoma2	1



OU  
Open U  
Securit

# Javascript RPG



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Bunyan [200] (Pwnables)  
We found a simple web application that robots made to serve tmp files for debugging purposes. SSH into the machine as `your_user@174.129.69.147` and exploit the web app to read their secret.

Submit

Announcements Top 10 Hints Vote

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Plaid CTF**  
**PlaidCTF**

PlaidCTF @ its\_das The game will be web-based with challenges. No need to worry about setting up VPNs!  
13 days ago - reply - retweet - favorite

PlaidCTF The registration for #pctf2012 is open! Be the first to register at [ctf.plaidctf.com](http://ctf.plaidctf.com) Be sure to read the rules. Stay tuned for more info  
13 days ago - reply - retweet - favorite

PlaidCTF @withzombies It'll run for 48 hours.  
18 days ago - reply - retweet - favorite

PlaidCTF Many people have been asking where they can register for #pctf. It's not available yet. We'll let you know when the registration page is up!  
20 days ago - reply - retweet - favorite

PlaidCTF We have pushed back pCTF by one week because of a date conflict with @ructf finals. The new time is April 27, 2012 21:00 - 29th 21:00 UTC.



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# Perks

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- on-site || off-site || hybrid
- besoin d'affiliation académique
- limite de membres

# Exemples de sujets explorés

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- Exploitation
  - Web
  - System
  - hw

# Sujets explorés (suite)

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- Cryptographie
  - 1st gen: cryptographie, enigma
  - 2nd gen: hashes, puzzles, small-RSA, password cracking, etc.
  - current-gen: crypto-oracle, big int maths

# Sujets explorés (suite)

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- reverse-engineering
- forensic
- réseautique
- stégano

# Sujets explorés (suite)

---

- recon
- system hardening
- algo
- lock-pick
- specialized platforms (Android, iOS, haiku, BSDs, VMS, ...)

# mais attention!

C'est de plus en plus dur

Tout le monde a une  
histoire

La mienne a commencé à la Boule de cristal du CRIM

# CipherCTF 4

Hey les enfants vous êtes à un vrai CTF



Open  
Sec



# Ensuite, un bel âge

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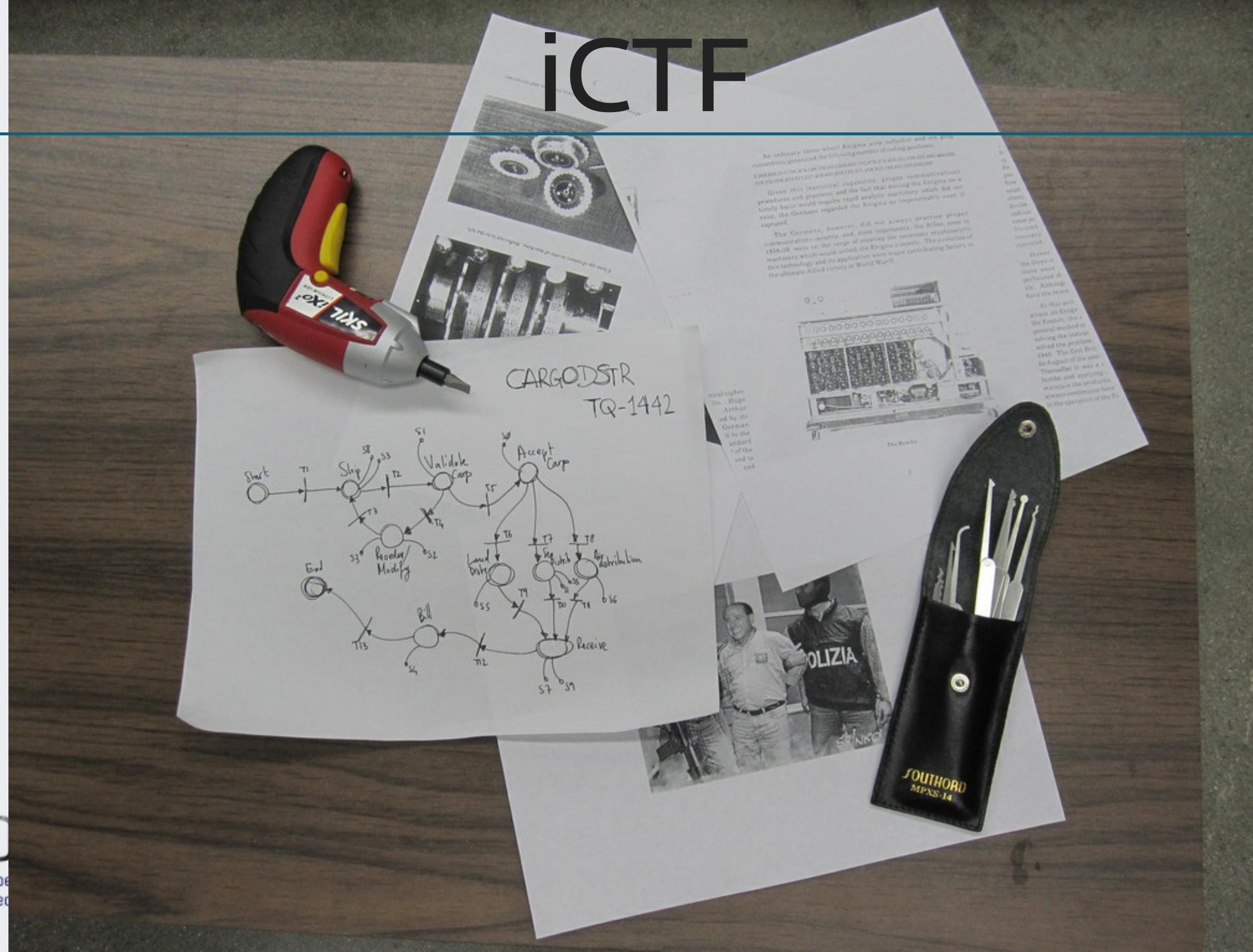
- HackUS, Hackfest
- Defcon Quals 18
- iCTF, CSAW
- ... (iterate)
- hack.lu
- plaidctf
- mozilla ctf
- NorthSec



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# iCTF



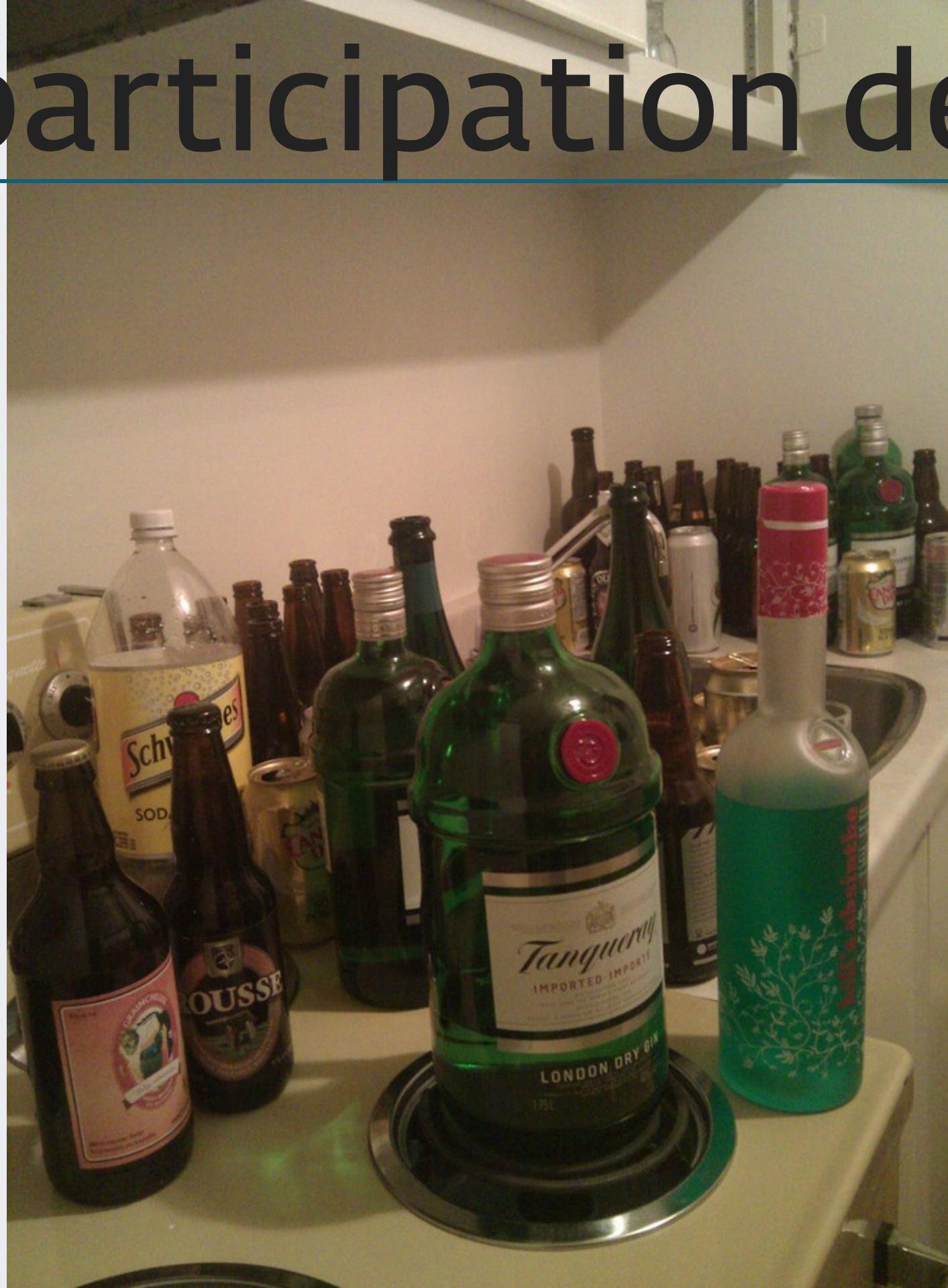
Open  
Sec

# Notre participation dégénéra

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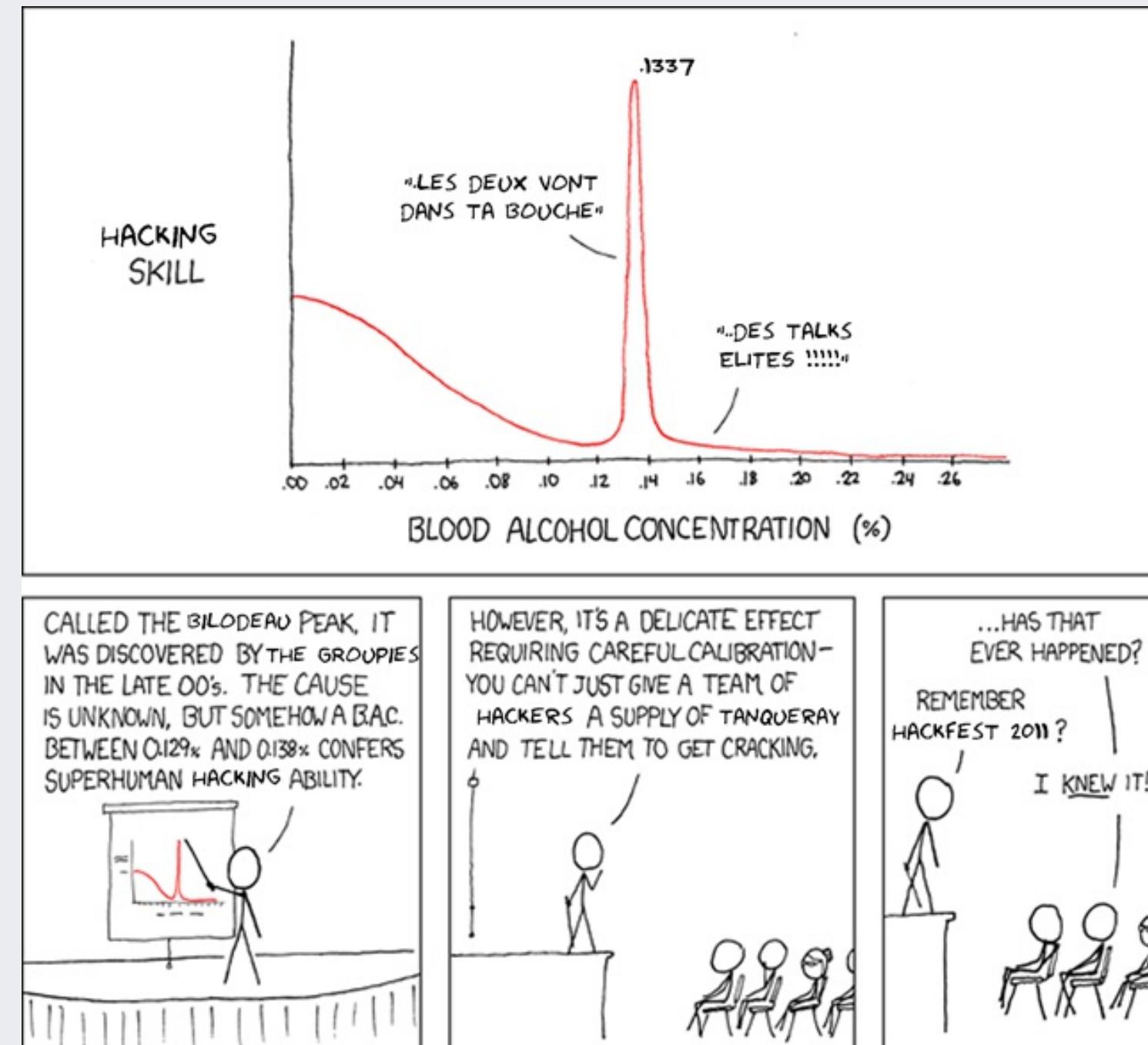
No Signal



Open  
S

# Tellement que...

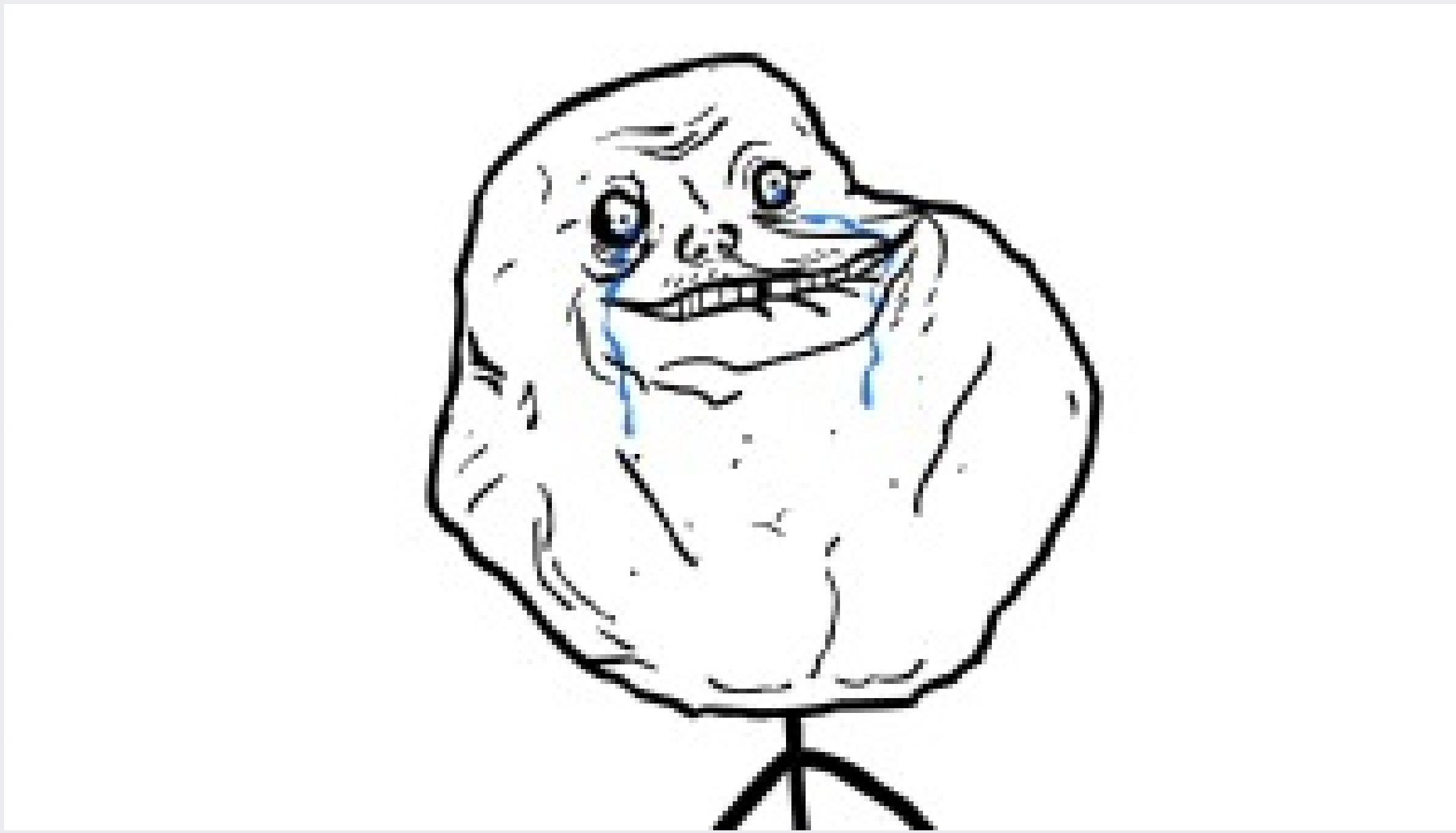
## le "Bilodeau" peak – hackfest 2011



Pour perdre tout  
CTF...

# Rester seul

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# skiddie tools only

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- nmap
- metasploit
- Backtrack / Kali

Never read write-ups!

# Never train.

Parce que le talent c'est inné

Never bookmark  
good tools

or never share them with your team

# Communication

- Ne jamais parler aux autres équipes pour discuter des épreuves
- Ne jamais participer sur IRC, Slack (RingZero, Northern Coallition)

Ne jamais imiter ses  
héros

# CSAW CTF



YOU WILL NEED ALL THE  
init nul  
CLONES YOU HAVE



O

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DIYLOL.COM

Ne jamais sortir des  
sentiers battus

```
25      INSERT INTO ats.location (uid, lat, lon, date)
26          VALUES ("$uid", $lat, $lon, `now()`);
27      if (!$LocationResults = mysql_query($sql)) {
28          echo 'MySQL Error: ' . mysql_error();
29      }
30
31  } else {
32      echo "Missing Database information";
33  }
34  echo "FLAG:PskVSzpxmt2DoapitaW4";
35
36 ?>
37
```



Open  
Suse

Jamais ça non plus...



Never code or learn  
to code

Jamais se fier aux  
outils ou aux notes  
des autres

- <http://pinboard.com/u:plaxx/t:security>

Participer seulement si vous êtes  
certain de gagner!

On n'apprends pas en perdant.

Plus sérieusement

perdre c'est mieux!

Avoir une muse



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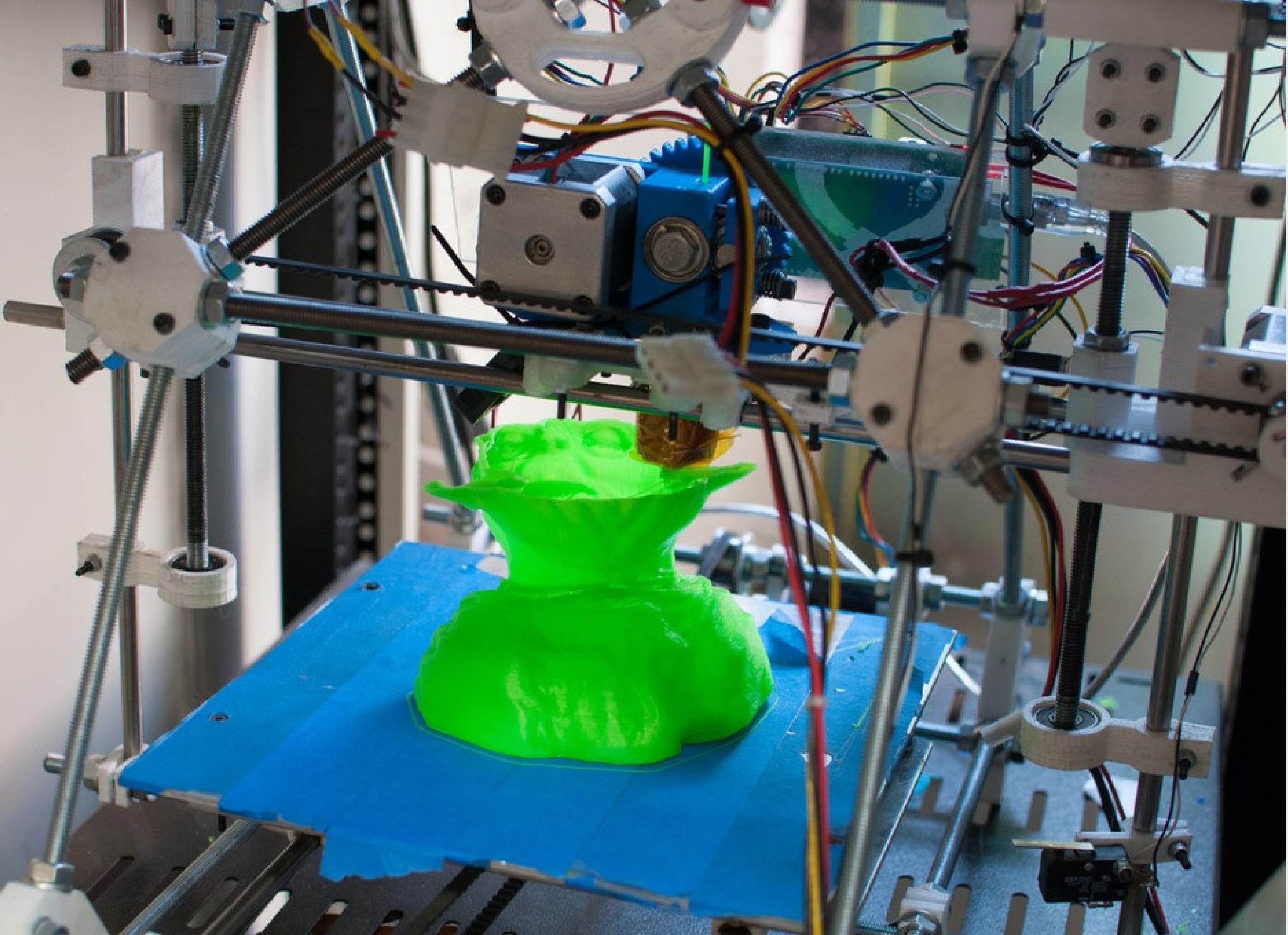


trouver vous un spot

N'importe lequel!... Litéralement



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# Ne pas se décourager

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Expliquer son  
'challenge' à ses  
pairs

# Causes désespérés

Avoir un département des causes désespérés.

Soyez proactifs pour  
bâtir une équipe

# Batissez-vous un toolchain

---

- <https://github.com/obilodeau/scratchpad>
- <https://pinboard.in/u:plaxx/t:security>

[Add topics](#)

55 commits 1 branch 0 releases 1 contributor

Branch: master ▾ New pull request Create new file Upload files

 obilodeau	added a lot of infosec/ stuff	Lat
 C	some old C code lying around	
 R	Some R code from 2013	
 asciidoc	Vim and AsciiDoc old notes	
 asm	had some fun with assembly	
 bench	benchmarking ways to benchmark	
 infosec	added a lot of infosec/ stuff	
 java	patched-up Java Exception test code	
 media	ffmpeg command to speedup videos, useful for pitivi montage	
 moose	subclass attribute override vs builder override tests	
 perl	old code done when debugging problems with Tk fonts	
 php	another round of perl, bash and php	
 python	python: custom exceptions in python3	
 raspi	RaspPi: more idiomatic way of referring to button pressed	
 shell	A handful of shell reminders	
 .gitignore	did some Java.. MessageFormats and Exceptions	
 LICENSE	initial import	
 README.md	copyright year bump and minor text improvements	
 docker-cheatsheet.adoc	Some docker / vagrant devops stuff	
 docker.adoc	Some docker / vagrant devops stuff	
 hard-drive-recovery.adoc	Here's the latest installment of hard drive recovery weekly	
 vagrant.ad	Some docker / vagrant devops stuff	
 vim.adoc	Vim and AsciiDoc old notes	

 obilodeau	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
..	
 crypto	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 csrf	CSRF sample payload and SQLi tips
 exploitation	Exploitation: old notes and notes from montrehack's ROP
 java	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 malware/tactics	server side malware tactics
 post-exploitation	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 reversing	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 web	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 xss	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 android.adoc	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 bro.adoc	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 crypto.adoc	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 dump-process-memory.sh	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 elf.ad	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 embedded.adoc	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 firmware-analysis.adoc	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 forensic.ad	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 gdb-tricks.ad	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 gpg.ad	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 hardware.ad	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 ics-scada.adoc	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 ida.txt	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 ios.ad	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 irc.adoc	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 linux-dmsetup-luks-cryptsetup.ad	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 linux-exfil.adoc	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 linux-memory.ad	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 linux-priv-escalation.ad	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 linux-syscall.c	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 magic-bytes.adoc	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 malware.ad	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 password-cracking.adoc	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 pe-dump.py	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 pe.txt	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 pefile.ipynb	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 perl.adoc	added a lot of infosec/ stuff
 php.ad	added a lot of infosec/ stuff

Searched for **security** in your bookmarks. Found 1,000 results

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★ [docker/docker-bench-security](#): The Docker Bench for Security is a script that checks for dozens of common best-practices around deploying Docker containers in production.

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verifies security of nodejs dependencies

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abusing postMessage

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# Perdre aux compés difficiles

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Pour être meilleurs aux compés plus faciles

- Développez des "réflexes"
- Voyez venir les tendances

# Realité

Ce sont des exercices. Ce n'est pas réel. Il faut penser au-delà de ce qu'on voit [en entreprise] ou lit.

# Admins

Les 'admins' veulent que vous réussissiez.

# Aller plus loin

et former la relève de nos équipes

# Montréhack

---

- 3e lundi du mois
- <http://montrehack.ca>



# HackFest Hackerspace

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- 4e jeudi du mois au Cégep de Sainte-Foy
- <http://www.hackfest.ca/hackfest-community/hackerspace>



# Enfin.. s'amuser!!!

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# CTF Generations



# STAR TREK

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# First Generation

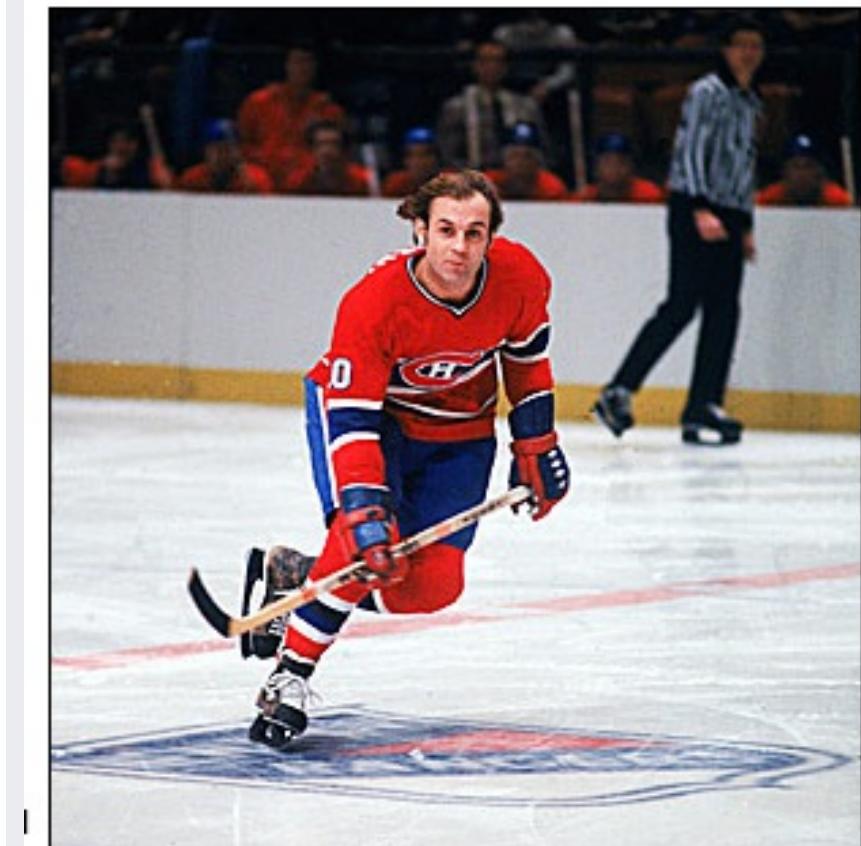
---

- Challenges were easier
- Some competitions really poor
- We were obnoxious, always drinking, yet still won
- We had it easy



**Before smoking's dangers were well-known, it was common to find greats like Stan Mikita puffing away before and even during games.**

Lee Balterman/Sports Illustrated



**It's amazing that Guy Lafleur could smoke a pack of cigarettes a day and still excel in an aerobically demanding sport like hockey.**

Bruce Bennett/Getty Images



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# STAR TREK<sup>365</sup>

## THE NEXT GENERATION®

BY PAULA M. BLOCK AND TERRY J. ERDMANN  
INTRODUCTION BY RONALD D. MOORE



# The Next Generation

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- Better educated
- More resources online
- Generally a lot stronger
- Challenges are **way** harder

# Conclusion

Y'en a pas de tool  
secret...

*Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently. There is no disgrace in honest failure; there is disgrace in fearing to fail.*

— Henry Ford



# Questions?

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Merci!

- [@obilodeau](#)
- [NorthSec](#)
- [My online bookmarks](#)
- [My programming and infosec scratchpad](#)
- [MontréHack monthly workshops](#)
- [RingZero Team Online CTF](#)



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The Northern Coalition Slack