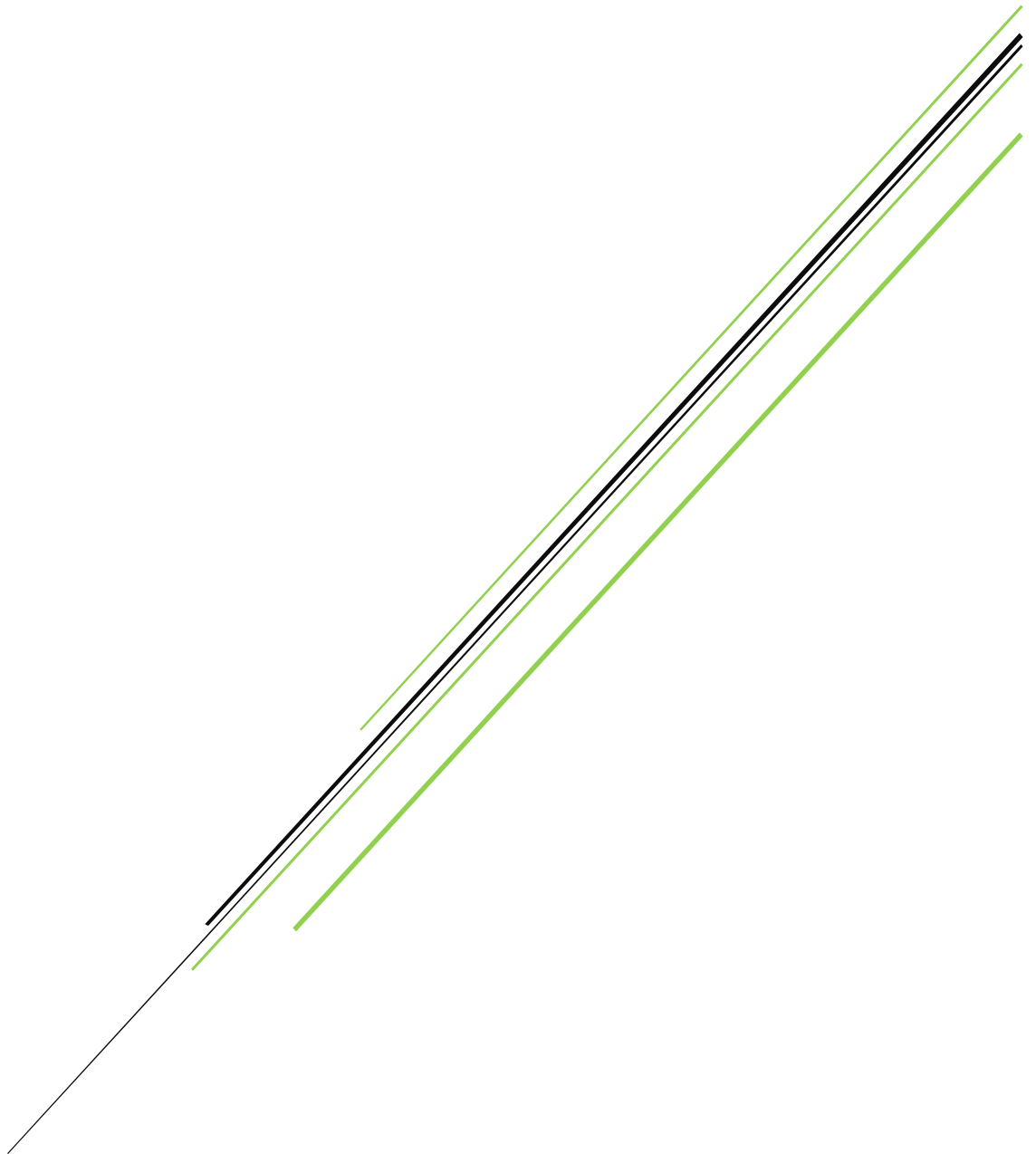




# SHELLMATES PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY

APPLICATION DOCUMENT



SHELLMATES  
8/2/2022



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## Introduction

This document Represents the candidacy file of not only one maybe future president, but a group of old Shellmates members that would like to unity their efforts to carry on the fascinating version of what Shellmates have become to another level, maybe not as bigger as it is but surely where the club can shine and provide a home for all his members to visit when they need it the most.

We must remember that this document represents only our subjective opinion on how next season should be and how we can overcome with some suggestions that we made, what we think might be some of the important struggles for not only the last season, but over a decade long that Shellmates has suffered from.

We must remind you as well, that the plans and strategies presented in this file cannot be achieved but only when you, Shellmates members, agree on each part of them, support them, and participate in each phase of the execution process. Without your agreement or support, these plans and strategies will only be written on some useless papers and won't see the day, not this time.

In this Candidacy Submission, you will find our new idea on how the Shellmates Head office should be (at least for this season), our humble vision on how we can guide and improve the activities, structure, and workflow of the club, and also our proposition plans and strategies that we want to achieve next season.

## Who we are?

We represent a group of Ex-Managers but also very experienced people from Shellmates Club that cares, more than any other thing, about the club and its progression. We want to bring our experience and ideas for the good of the club and, with the help of our beloved members, launch and achieve a memorable season full of excitement and joy.

Our Team members, that is applying all together in a single position, is composed of the Following:

- **Walid Berrouk** - "Started as a simple adherent member in the season of 2019, I discovered Shellmates club and joined the community in my first year at ESI Algiers. I loved the spirit but also got interested in the cybersecurity field and I wanted to know more about it. At first, I'm not going to lie, it was a hard time for me to understand the concepts of Hacking and how you should learn and practice things, but with time, effort and the help of our precious ex-members I found my way out and started to have an idea of how



things work. To be honest I really enjoyed the experience and I want to share it with you as well.

Now, after 3 years of experience and occupying the Software Development Department for around one year and a half as a Head manager, I think that the time has come for me to be part of the Shellmates leaders and help carry out the glory of what it has become, and what it should be”.

- **Oussama Abdallah Merouan** - “I joined Shellmates in 2019 in my first year at ESI, because a day before the welcome day, I was chatting to a buddy on the train about a cybersecurity topic, and a person I didn't know named Malik was next to me (what are the odds?).

What I loved best about Shellmates was watching men like Hafidh and Redouane talk about technical issues and show a desire to share their expertise, something I didn't see in other groups. After being introduced to the CTF world, I became absolutely devoted to this club and did my best to get more information and learn. Luckily, Shellmates was the perfect place for this. People were extremely helpful. We had workshops every week, and no matter what you ask, you will always find a response, and this only made me more committed to the club.

After three years with Shellmates and a year as the technical department manager, it's time to bring my vision to the club, to inspire new members, to share my knowledge and grow our community, and most importantly, to assist Shellmates prosper.”

- **Abderrahmane Oualili** - “During my first year at ESI-SBA, I got really interested in cybersecurity, and I started playing wargames, different challenges from picoCTF and playing CTFs. It was during that period that a friend introduced me to Shellmates, so I started following different events and activities organized by the club. I decided to join Shellmates in 2020.

During my time at Shellmates I learned a lot, and got to know some awesome and interesting people, so I think it's my duty to pass on the legacy and the knowledge, and bring my vision and my touch the club, in order to make Shellmates great again, along with my fellow head councils.”

- **Yahia Hachemi** - “Since high school, I've had an interest in cybersecurity, which grew when I studied linux foundations in my first year at ESI. At the



time, I heard about Shellmates and its security nerds and amazing people, so I joined in 2020.

The last two years at Shellmates have been full of unforgettable experiences, especially last year when I was the Human Resources Department manager, therefore I decided to put my knowledge from the previous two years to good use via the head council. Our vision will result in a new form of Shellmates that will glow brightly in the night sky."

## **Motivations for becoming Shellmates first council.**

Shellmates, the club in which we have all been members for many years, has given us a lot. We gained these abilities and skills owing to this club and its members, and now feels like the right moment to give back to the club.

Furthermore, we have certain ideas that we believe will propel the club to new heights. Managing a club is not easy work, but thanks to the previous year in which we were all managers, we have obtained the necessary expertise, and with your support, we will do our best to make Shellmates even better.

We think that the plans and strategies below can neither be easily achieved nor suitable for a single president member, big challenges and discussions must be established in order to put in place and maintain that strategies, and we are counting our council member's strategic view and domain experience to lead these plans and work for the best to achieve them.

## **Strengths and weaknesses of this season**

- **Strengths**
  - **Shellmates Activities :**
    - Last year, and throughout the years in Shellmates Club, we have found that the club's Daily and Weekly activities that members do together (Hacking Sessions, Workshops, Small Night Competitions ...) represent a big asset in the club's actions and influence on its members and its environment. Not only that, but we can say as well that these activities are the core signature of the club and the heart of the club general activity, so we need to focus more on these periodic sessions, benefit from their effectiveness, and try to create a warmful



environment for our members where they can share their ideas, suggestions and play and learn together. To

- To Talk more about last season, we have noticed that these sessions were having a very good impact on our community and members, especially with their organized planification and structured content. This aspect made us rethink more about their importance and add them as a main asset to focus on.
- The events' quality is excellent. Even though there was some tension throughout the work because of the volume of events, the end outcomes were typically extremely good, as evidenced by the favorable comments we received from participants.
- Resurrecting previous events like Hack till s7our and BSides Algiers
- Developing the mentoring program that has been a big success, allowing many new members to either begin their path in cybersecurity or improve their existing skills.

- **Weaknesses**

- **The Large Internal Community :**

As we have seen not only in the last season but also in previous ones, the number of accepted people in the club regardless of their experience is way beyond either the club's necessity or capacity. This led up to a hard time on the Managers of the departments trying to manage their members and high amount of inactiveness.

- **The inactiveness permission :**

As it refers to the previous point as well, we also think that letting that aspect without a strict regulation on how a member should contribute to the club, changed completely the way on how a community is founded (our community at least). A member of a community, as he wanted to be part of it, must contribute to the achievement of its last goals and perspectives, or at least, interact with others in order to help establish a good environment and a warmful place to exchange and share. Coexisting in a community without any interaction or activity inside the club is a practice that should



no longer be permitted, and strict regulations must be set up, for the betterment of the community.

- **The variety of events making :**

Last Year's Season was a rich one full of activities, interaction, but also events. Despite all the good time we have spent together throughout the onsite or online events, the organization and structuring quality of each one of them wasn't at its best, especially during the preparation process. Focusing on the quantity more than the quality was, since the beginning of time, a bad strategy that we need to revert in order to enjoy our event experience.

- **The focus on the content more than the people :**

We have also noticed that the content of last year, as much as it contributed positively to the season's reputation and triumph, we must say that the members were at some point neglected and the focus was more on "How much content did we make ?" or "Did we achieve The high expectation ?" when the members need only small activities that contain some information sharing, or an event well organized where they don't need to be worried about anything else but learning and having fun.

## **Our main strategy : a council**

- **Why a Council ?**

The Idea of a Head Council to manage the club was created in order to summon all the collective effort of each candidate that, alone, couldn't find a way to take the battle and lead such a great community. Together, they thought about a sort of a common rights and duties agreement in conducting the team by uniting themselves throughout a well-organized and horizontal council structure.

The Council's main purpose is to set order and establish a strategic plan for the good season conduct, it will also represent a reference for all members and managers to return to for consultancy, approval, and guidance.



Moreover, the establishment of such a structure will replace, for a season period duration, the single Leadership system by a new counseling and order system. By meaning, The president and vice-president will be replaced by a set of Counselors Head chiefs with distinguished yet none exclusive roles that will claim the same equal rights and responsibilities to rule the club's structure as the previous president and vice-president roles in the ancient system.

Our Main goal is to divide the high-pressure work of a single leader into a dependent and independent set of tasks so the members, as well as the managers, can benefit from each member of the council collectively and effectively without overwhelming them or filling out their schedules. Thus, new roles and tasks are officially added to the Council responsibilities to ensure the smoothness of their achievements.

- **Role of the council**

- Represent a Higher Structure in the club with all its responsibilities.
- Defines the Regulations, Policy, and Conduct Code to be followed as a Shellmates Member.
- Defines The Vertical and Horizontal Structure of the club.
- Lead all the departments and Teams and define the managers and the role of each one.
- Be Part of the decision making process in the Management Council (Head Council with its Managers) and have a higher vote value.
- Create the club's roadmap and Monitor the achievement of the strategic and road plans throughout the season.
- Represent a reference for all managers and members in need of guidance and approval for any activity.
- Manage Relations between the club and the School Administration, and other organizations as an official representative of the club.
- Manage the Membership and roles inside the club and inside the Head Council.

- **The role of each member of the council**

- **General Secretary (Abderahmane Oualili):** responsible for the communication and interaction with the School Administration and Some External Relations.
- **Head Consultant (Yahia Hachemi):** responsible for the Management Council meeting organization and progress, represents the main



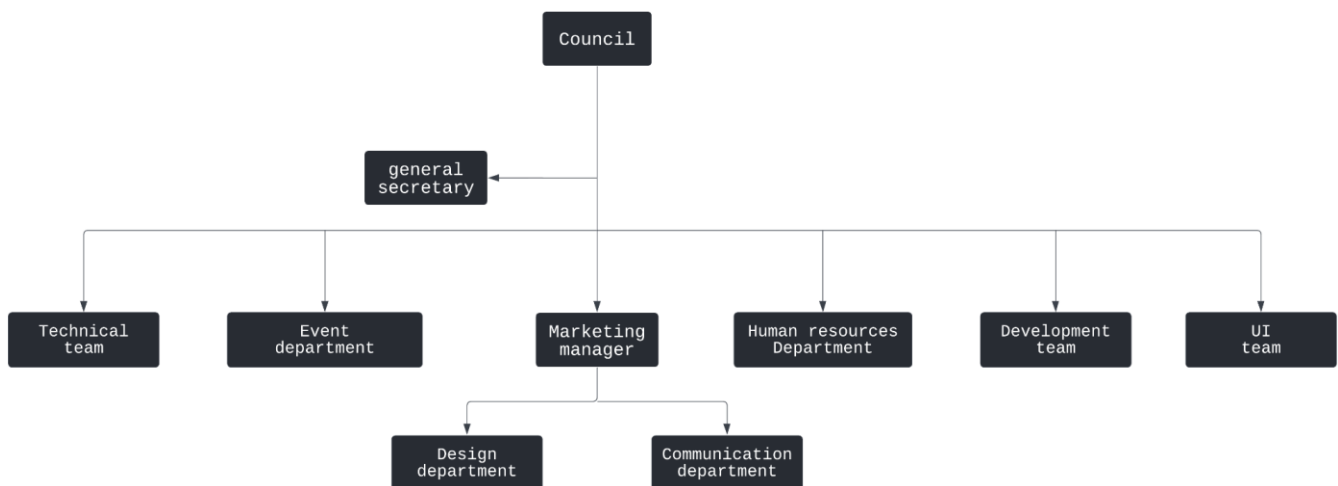


reference in terms of experience sharing and guidance for the members and the managers.

- **Council Officer (Oussama Abdallah Merouane):** The membership *director* serves as the *head* of the Admission Committee and works to grow the *council's* membership, it serves the role of redistribution for the Council's members as in an appending ceremony or a regular task distribution.
- **Trustee, Policy & External Affair (Walid Berrouk) :** responsible for the Policy and Regulations of the club, the structure, strategy and represent a frontal showcase of the club outside the box (ESI and its clubs).
- **General Member :** A Council member that has the same rights and responsibilities of a Head Council member and can contribute in the achievement of all the responsibilities and tasks talked about above (By Default, every Council Member is a General Member).

## The annual strategy

- Changes to be made to the structure of the departments



- **Event department:**

Event department is the result of the merger of three departments (logistics, sponsoring, and relex). We made this decision after noticing that the three have complementary tasks, and if we look at each one separately, we can clearly see that it doesn't have enough tasks to keep its members active.



We omitted the task of preparing the equipment on the event day from the logistics department and made this a responsibility for all club members, leaving just the task of creating the need list.

The sponsoring and relex responsibilities will remain the same, such as creating a contact list and reaching out to companies to acquire us good deals for future events or the club in general. We noted that sponsoring was having difficulty finding sponsors in prior events and ended up still seeking until the event was almost around the corner, so we set the following guidelines to prevent this:

- Sponsorship must begin three months before the event in order to have more time to contact companies, sign with enterprises before they are already taken, have more time to react in the case of failing to get a sponsor, show the sponsors how serious we are about our event (this three month duration can even be extended with certain events, after creating the agenda, the sponsoring for certain important events such as Hacki.INI. Because of the significance of the event, sponsoring tasks can start at the beginning of the year).
- Only members with confidence, strong public speaking abilities, persuasion skills, and expertise in sponsoring will proceed to meet with sponsors. This member can be accompanied by someone with less expertise in order to pass on knowledge.

This department will have one manager and up to three co-managers, with a preference for one with a background in logistics, a second in sponsorsoring, and a third in relex.

○ **Design department:**

The design department will continue to exist, with the duty of preparing design materials for the communication department and assuring their quality.



The design manager, along with the co-manager, must obviously have a good design background, and it is his/her decision to conduct workshops for members who are new to design.

- **Communication department:**

It's one of the club's most important departments, symbolizing our connection to the community. Because of the influence it has on the club's image and reputation, the communication department must be particularly good.

This department will be in charge of all postings. In addition to being in charge of the inbox, they must ensure that they write in a clean, proper, and appealing manner and never publish during random hours such as 9:03 or in periods with little activity. Posting should only be done at x:00h or x:30h where x will be the time in which our activity is at its peak according to our social media stats and only at.

**Note :** We decided to create a new post with the title "marketing manager" with the aim of establishing this link between the two departments due to the strong connection of the communication and design departments and witnessing numerous mistakes happening in the previous year.

- **Human resources department:**

The Human Resources Department was one of the questionable departments last year due to a work that might be completed by two members rather than an entire department (which we proceed to do later that season). As a result, we opted to merge it with the internal activity team, and now this department will be in charge of managing internal of Shellmates and will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Preparing forms as needed.
- Tracking members' activity with the assistance of other managers.
- Scheduling internal activities.
- Supervising Community activities.



- Being Responsible for the members activeness, working and sharing environment with all the digital solutions included.

- o **Technical team:**

This is one of Shellmates' key teams; it will consist of tech-savvy members with knowledge in the cybersecurity field to accomplish their respective tasks, which will include working on projects, as well as preparing challenges for CTFs and all the responsibilities that come with this. Every other activity with a technical component will be delegated to the technical department, such as creating a demonstration for welcome day, assisting in stands, and supplying information when the communication department wishes to publish about a technical issue.

- o **Development team:**

Another significant shellmates team that is needed in order to create and maintain softwares inside the club. We have seen this team last season as a department with a certain dependency, a huge amount of people integrated inside this structure, but unfortunately the results weren't as high as the expectations.

Even though all the members were interested at first, we couldn't give them enough tasks to fulfill the needs of the club since they needed experience. When the time came to talk about experience, there wasn't enough dedication from the members to learn and progress with the managers, as the tasks grew up and packed up rapidly.

Our Main goal this year is to create a team with experienced developers that are motivated enough to create and be part of some projects necessary to respond to the club's needs. They need also to prioritize projects, with shellmates websites at the top of the list. Some other motivated individuals can be added to the team to help them grow in experience and talent in the development field, yet it is still a big responsibility for them to learn and keep themselves updated in the same level as their mentors.

Other responsibilities, such as creating pages applications for shellmates, will be assigned to the team.

- o **UI team:**



Team UI is one of the newest additions to the club structure for this season after noting how much we required a dedicated individual to take care of this portion, and we believe that by doing so, our projects can only improve while also speeding up the process. The product design manager will head this team.

- **Other changes to be made to the club**

- The possibility to open the registration more than once in the season depending on the need and the requests.
- Adding criterias to accept new members :
  - ESI priority
  - Starter event : Organize your own distinguished Hacking activite (only the ones who worked in the started event will join)
- Members will receive a warning after 1 month of inactivity and will be removed in the following month if he/she didn't explain his/her situation.
- An event manager for each event, members are divided into teams depending on the task (event, comm, design ...) with a co-manager as a Team leader (Or delegated directly by a co-manager to get some experience).
- The following is the distinction between teams and departments:
  - The department is more structured, with specific goals and tasks, whereas teams have more latitude and their purpose is to complete worthwhile projects over the season (during events periods that will have tasks)
  - Members can join departments with no prior experience, whereas team individuals are expected to begin work immediately and will be made up of experienced members.
- Adding New Regulations, Policy and Code of Conduct.

- **The planning of events and activities**

Every club revolves around events and activities. The club can interact with its community, share knowledge, and reach new people through these,



implying the importance of these two. To ensure that the previous metrics are met, we made sure to have events or activities that are informative, helpful, and varied, with a mix of classic Shellmates' sessions and new, fresh ones.

- **Events :**

- **Welcome day**

The first event of the season, as with any other club, is Welcome Day, during which students learn about the club, its passion, structure, events, and other relevant information. On the other hand, this enables the club to recruit new members who will assist the club in reaching new levels and, eventually, becoming the successors.

The welcome day should be the occasion for us to display our *"technical profile"* to everyone. This can be accomplished by staging live demonstrations of attacks. This will show everyone who we are and encourage everyone to join us or at the very least follow us.

- **General assembly**

A general assembly will be held once registration is completed and members are accepted into the club (preferably onsite). New members will be welcomed during this session, along with giving a more detailed description of the club structure so they can choose which department they want to work in, as well as a description of the integration process. Following that, there will be a mini-CTF. After forming teams, they will participate in the mini CTF, which includes beginner-friendly challenges, to introduce everyone to this type of activity, motivate them, and show them what they will learn with the club. Mentors will teach members how to solve and succeed in challenges during the CTF.

- **Awareness Stands**

A classic shellmate to maintain because of its large impact. It aided many people who lacked cybersecurity knowledge while also attracting new members to the club. There will be a little alteration in its operations by selecting



periods during the season when stands will take the place instead of leaving it free throughout the season.

- **Mentoring program**

An internal event that was developed last year and received positive feedback. It is a month in which participants interested in cybersecurity will be introduced to the major categories of this subject through scheduled workshops, all while using the CTF platform. Some changes will be made to this year's version to reduce some of the pressure on the mentees.

- **Hack.INI**

Hack.INI, which stands for "Hacking Initiation," is a classic and one of the season's key events. During this event, participants will complete a CTF with increasing difficulty while also having the opportunity to attend workshops in several cybersecurity-related topics. Last year's edition (36h version) got great reviews and allowed for a variety of activities while ensuring that all teams were satisfied, as a fairly diversified set of challenges in terms of difficulty is feasible.

- **BSides Algiers**

BSides Algiers is the Algerian version of the famous event Bside, which is intended for top teams and hence requires strict preparation in order to meet the expectations.

- **Hack Till Shour**

Hack until Shour is a unique experience. It's our only individual CTF, and it has the added bonus of being completed in Ramadan. All of this, combined with the fact that we received such positive feedback from them in the previous version, prompted us to make it one of the events for this season.

- **Infosec Week**

Infosec Week is one of the most recent Shellmates events that we decided to preserve. It is the only event that focuses on the theoretical aspects of cybersecurity by bringing



excellent people to present cybersecurity topics that we typically do not get the opportunity to discuss.

- **Shell Megadon**

Shell Magedon is the newest event that we are introducing. It will be the first CTF that is not a jeopardy style, but rather one "Defense & Attack". This will assist to diversify the kind of CTFs we offer and add something new to the table. The first edition will only be a beta version to test the event's feasibility by asking selected teams to participate in it.

- **Carnage**

The final event we propose is likewise a novel idea. It's a kind of pwny race amongst several members in which the first to pwn wins, but the objective will be a complete machine and the goal is to reach the root. This concept is not yet complete. There is still considerable debate about whether to have multiple systems or just one, as well as whether having one root flag is sufficient or including intermediary flags.

- **Activities :**

- **Challenges Series**

Keep our social media and community connection alive by launching a monthly challenge and announcing the winners in stories. It will be the technical department's responsibility to prepare a challenge each month (the difficulty and category is up to them).

- **Hack Talks**

One of our key community activities that caused the community server to expand and created a fantastic information sharing environment, this must be kept.

- **Live Hacking Sessions**

In a live hacking session, a member collaborates with other members to solve a challenge or a box. This is a fantastic opportunity for members to connect with one another and





understand how other people think in order to achieve a solution.

#### ■ **Pwny Racing**

Pwny racing is an activity in which two players compete to solve a challenge. Whoever is the first to accomplish so wins. It's a fascinating, exciting, and educational activity with a lot of promise. It is possible to expand it to an online tournament.

#### ■ **Weekly / bi-weekly workshops**

We should resume the workshops we used to undertake in order to continue sharing expertise. To keep things more organized, consider organizing a series of workshops on a specific topic. Weekly or biweekly workshops on a specific subject, such as:

- OWASP TOP 10
- PWN.INI
- DevOps path

#### ■ **Daily Challenges and Infinite CTF**

The shellmates website, which will be one of our primary goals this year, will include two critical elements. The first is daily challenges, which means that a daily challenge will be selected and users will be able to solve it and get points for doing so. The second characteristic is an endless CTF. In other words, some challenges will always be available for users to solve, and they will earn points for doing so.

#### ■ **Shell Hour**

This year, a new idea called shell hour was launched. It's a smart option to introduce some concepts that aren't too long and don't have to be cybersecurity related.

#### ■ **Hacking Podcasts**

The hacking podcast is the last but not least activity. In this episode, we will invite a cybersecurity expert with deep knowledge and conduct a Q&A session with him on a specific



topic, resulting in a very informative and entertaining podcast to listen to. It will be published on Spotify and shared across our social accounts.

○ **Notes :**

- Internal activities Handled by HR members.
- External (Community/Social Media) Activities Assured by Departments Members (Design, Com, Tech ...) with a leader of the HR department.
- Activities are in a limited time period to maximize effect and minimize work stress.

## **Regulations and prohibitions**

- Respect all your fellow members, regardless of their age, origin or any other double standard.
- Prioritize your studies over the club's activities.
- Always share information.
- The decision of the club managers is final, and is not to be disputed by other members unless that decision seems really illogical and you think they're doing it wrong.
- The Council, after a unanimity vote of all the Council's Members, can add, once a season, a member to the council Headquarters with a General Member or a Consultant Role. After that, The council can add other members to the council if all its members agree.
- All of our content should be in English (Exception for the aid, moharam...).
- A member can only belong to one department or team ( exceptions can be made with members who are really motivated and showed commitment in their current position).



## Conclusion

This is the council's vision for the club's future, a document cannot express our eagerness to maintain Shellmates' increasing performance and keep this cybersecurity community alive and well. We are constantly open to new ideas and changes, and no matter what you decide, what we care about is seeing our Shellmates prosper.

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