# Web security start-up receives $1.1 million

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A technology start-up created by a graduate of the University of California, Riverside Bourns College of Engineering that focuses on helping web site owners prevent, detect and recover from hacker attacks has raised $1.1 million to expand operations.

The money will allow StopTheHacker, which was co-founded by Anirban Banerjee shortly after receiving his Ph.D. from UC Riverside in 2008, to move solely from research and development into selling and marketing its product while continuing to develop new features.

"The timing is perfect," Banerjee said. "The demand for web site security services is exploding and we are perfectly aligned to take advantage of that."

The numbers back that up. In 2009, the company had two partners. Today, it has seven, including several large web site hosting businesses such as Parallels and Host Europe Group, which hosts about 1 million web sites. It is also in talks with about 20 more, including five that host more than 1 million web sites.

Demand for the services offered by StopTheHacker is driven in large part by Google removing sites that contain malicious code implanted by hackers from its search results. An analysis by StopTheHacker found 6,000 sites are removed, or blacklisted, each day by Google.

Being victimized can have a large impact on revenue and reputation. For example, in January, online retailer Zappos asked its 24 million

customers to reset their passwords after being victimized by a cyberattack.

StopTheHacker, which was based in Riverside until moving to San Francisco last year, is different than other web site security applications in that it uses artificial intelligence algorithms to detect malware. Other providers use signature, or database, solutions that are not as effective.

StopTheHacker.com's advantage is that it is non-intrusive because it is offered on the cloud, meaning users don't have to install software or change anything beyond what the web site host is doing.

StopTheHacker, which is aiming to work with small and medium sized businesses that can't afford staff devoted to web site security, offers a suite of services, including monitoring web sites for malware, assessing web sites for vulnerabilities and monitoring to see if a web site has been blacklisted.

Banerjee, who came to the United States from India in 2004 to pursue his Ph.D. at UC Riverside, co-founded the company with Michalis Faloutsos, a computer science and engineering professor at UC Riverside with whom he studied under.

StopTheHacker also employs two students who received master's degrees in computer science at the university, Adam Woss and Conley Read. Read works part-time as a consultant.

Faloutsos, who has studied web security for 15 years, believes it is following the same trajectory as desktop computer security. Ten years ago, people didn't think much about desktop security. Today, nearly every desktop has antivirus software.

Today, about 10 percent of web sites are protected against malware,

software designed to disrupt computer operation. Faloutsos predicts that number will reach 90 percent by 2015.

The $1.1 million comes from several private investors, led by Moscow, Russia-based Runa Capital, and the National Science Foundation, which in 2009 and 2010 provided $600,000 in funding from its Small Business Innovative Research grant program.

Faloutsos also credits several others with helping StopTheHacker. These people include: Don Dye, the president and CEO of Riverside-based Acorn Technology; Rajan Kassety, CEO and co-founder of Riverside-based Terrafore; and Helen Chen, vice president of business development at Riverside-based Ambryx Biotechnology Inc.

Provided by University of California - Riverside

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