UK spy agency asks academics to tackle cyber risks

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(AP)—Britain's government says a new research institute partly funded by the country's eavesdropping spy agency will ask mathematicians and computer scientists to join the fight against cyber threats.

The Government Communications Headquarters, or GCHQ—Britain's equivalent of the U.S. National Security Agency—said Thursday that a new 3.8-million-pound ($6.1-million) program would fund a research institute at University College London.

Science minister David Willetts says academics would work with government experts and businesses to tackle emerging problems in the cyber arena.

Last week, Iain Lobban, head of GCHQ warned that businesses face "credible threats to cybersecurity of an unprecedented scale, diversity and complexity."

He said major companies, defense contractors and government departments had all been the victims of successful cyberattacks.

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