NYC students, hackers train for cybersecurity jobs

April 11 2013, by Jake Pearson

Every Wednesday evening about two dozen teenagers and 20-somethings gather in a New York City computer lab and start hacking.

But they're not shadowy criminals: They're students training to become "white-hat" hackers, cybersecurity experts dedicated to protecting data and information for businesses and governments.

Hacking attempts against federal agencies and companies have become an almost daily occurrence—and experts say there's a dearth of highly trained experts with real-world experience.

That's why students from the Polytechnic Institute of New York University are increasingly being trained to develop hands-on skills.

Instead of just classroom instruction, they're honing their hacking skills with weekly Hack Night events, competing in hacking competitions and attempting to discover software flaws for companies like Samsung and PayPal through so-called bug bounty programs.

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