The Lighter Side of Things: The Inevitable Convergence of the Internet of Things and Cybersecurity

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NASA In the Mix of Things....
Of Things to Come!

According to a 2011 Cisco white paper “The Internet of Things: How the Next Evolution of the Internet is Changing Everything”, there will be 50 BILLION connected to the Internet by the year 2020!

- The IoT brings great promise to the lives of mankind:
  - Promotes efficiency in our day-to-day lives through data analytics collected by IoT sensors;
  - Underpins the realization of sustainability by the creation of smart cities that use IoT technologies and;
  - Will bring about a new level of safety as connected vehicles provided greater awareness and avoidance of potentially hazardous situations.
IoT and the Inevitable Convergence of Cybersecurity

Just as the IoT brings with it the promise of improving the lives of people everywhere, it also brings with it convergence of cyber insecurity and potentially catastrophic implications to safety and privacy anywhere.

- **July 2015**: Two security researchers remotely took over a Jeep Chrysler from a distance of 10 miles. The researchers accessed the vehicle over the cellular system and controlled the vehicle through its onboard infotainment system.
- **April 2015**: Security researcher Chris Roberts was detained by FBI after tweeting about taking over the flight controls of a commercial aircraft during flight. Roberts was subsequently banned by United Airline from flying on their aircraft.
- **August 2015**: FDA issues an alert that certain infusion pumps were vulnerable to remote hacking.
- **Early 2013**: Iranian hackers remotely accessed a small flood control dam 20 miles north of NY City.
Why IoT in Cyberspace Will Flourish as a “Contested Environment”

By the year 2020, the cyberspace will be a completely contested environment. Contested meaning that hostile individuals or groups will have the explicit intent and the means to disrupt, degrade or destroy activities that take place in, or connect through, cyberspace.

• The more connected things that move into the cyberspace domain without appropriate safeguards built in, the more susceptible to compromise they will become;
• 60 years of poor software development processes continues to be the primary attack vector;
• The security skills required to keep up with innovation and the speed to market is significantly behind:
  • Security engineers – Those who can “bake” security into the system development process (proactive);
  • Software Assurance engineers – Those who can implement secure coding practices into software (proactive) and;
  • Cyber Defenders – Those who have know how to identify, protect, detect, respond and recover from security events and incidents (reactive).
The Cybersecurity Professional Hiring Dilemma

The demand for cybersecurity professionals at every level is high, yet the supply pipeline is dribbling:

- According to the Bureau of labor statistics, between 2012-2022 the growth rate for cybersecurity professionals will be 37%;

- Mike Brown, CEO of Symantec suggested in 2015 that the global demand for cybersecurity professionals will grow to 6 million by 2019, but there will be a shortage of 1.5 million professionals;

- Competition is stiff in many markets. Companies regularly “poach” cybersecurity professionals from their competitors
  - Professionals can earn anywhere from $90k per year with just a year or two of experience to $300k per year with less than 10 years of experience.
  - In rare cases, some professionals are making nearly $1M per year.

- The federal government has a particularly tough time competing from a salary perspective
  - NASA is not immune. While our brand is arguably one of the most recognizable and strongest, keeping solid performers in this market is extremely challenging and;
  - We can’t compete with salaries, so we have to be creative to attract and retain good candidates.
What Needs to Happen on the Educational Front

Education that produces top-shelf cybersecurity professionals will be the pervasive underpinning to ensuring a secure IoT and cyber environment.

- STEM courses are paramount. While cybersecurity policy based education is needed, it alone won’t ensure secure systems;
- Security engineering, Security software assurance, computer science, mathematics (the hard stuff) and the like are gaps in skills that need to be filled from here to fore;
- Cyber principles must be taught earlier (kindergarten) in the education ecosystem. Hands on education should follow shortly there after and continue throughout the post secondary educational years and;
  - Follow the National Centers for Academic Excellence model at the middle school and high school level.