



Air Force Association's

CyberPatriot

The National High School Cyber Defense Competition

Presented by

Northrop Grumman Corporation

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Fact Sheet

From a concept paper less than two years ago, *CyberPatriot* began with a February 2009 demonstration and immediately went nationwide for the 2009-10 school year competition, staging the largest High School Cyber Defense Competition ever conducted. The next step, Full Nationwide Deployment, has been made possible by a generous grant from Northrop Grumman Corporation, who has committed to significant multiyear funding and extensive in-kind support for the initiative. Through Northrop Grumman's support, the program will reach many thousands of students annually – years before full deployment was imagined, but just in time for the urgent need *CyberPatriot* answers – building the human component of cybersecurity.

The Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security (CIAS) at the University of Texas at San Antonio, creator of the National Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition, is a Founding Partner of *CyberPatriot*, as is Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), who provides the platform for the competition with their patent-pending commercial cyber defense trainer, Cyber NEXS. Strategic Partners General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems (GD AIS), Raytheon, and Microsoft have also pledged significant multiyear support for the program, and this unique combination of commercial, government, and nonprofit expertise has produced a model for rapid expansion.

This national competition will excite high school students and motivate them toward careers in cyber defense and other STEM disciplines, while instilling greater national cyber security awareness. Math/computer science is the STEM discipline with the greatest projected job growth, but it is also a discipline where we lose a large percentage of underrepresented persons and women in the leap from high school to college – *CyberPatriot* will change that. Moreover, educating a large number of users to the basic elements of computer/network security is certain to increase the security of our national infrastructure.

CyberPatriot III begins in the spring 2010 to allow coach preparation over the summer. A “two-division” approach was chosen to attract both the college prep computer science students in the “Open Division” and the more diverse audience numbering over 500,000 in the nation's JROTC detachments of all services. Both Divisions will proceed through a similar, but distinct, series of online training and qualification rounds to select finalists for the same D.C. area in-person championship. The internet-delivered education and competition enables this program to reach thousands of students at modest expense, delivering unprecedented “bang for the buck” in an urgently needed skill set.

The April 2011 CyberFutures Conference will include the live competition (not unlike the Scripps Spelling Bee), as well as a cyber symposium and a technology exhibition. The pace of expansion of this program has been remarkable – a more gradual expansion was possible, but the threat is in no way “gradual,” and our sense of urgency is driven by the need.