



CYBERSECURITY FACULTY AND STUDENTS PRESENT ON THE DARK NET MARKETS

Published: Sep 14 2018 12:00AM

Networking and Cybersecurity professor, Mr. David Vargas, and Montgomery College's cybersecurity graduate Adarsh Shrestha, had the opportunity to represent MC at this year's Techno Security and Digital Forensic Myrtle Beach Conference from June 2-5. Mr. Vargas gave one presentation by himself and one with the student.

Mr. Vargas and MC graduate Adarsh gave a presentation entitled, "How Cyber Criminals Shop: An Introduction to Darknet Markets." They explained that inside hidden sites with innocent names such as Europol and Dream marketplace, cybercriminals gather to trade and connect with other cybercriminals to develop ideas that will enhance their criminal enterprises. Their presentation provided the attendees with much insight into dark markets, the important role they play in the conduct of cybercrime, the most common crimes that are conducted via the marketplace, and the technologies and techniques that darknet markets use to stay secure and anonymous. Likewise, their presentation discussed the important role that cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, Z-coin and Monero continue to play in darknet market operation. They explained that while law enforcement has been able to take down some of the higher profile darknet markets, other markets quickly rises to take its place - a game of wack-a-mole that the criminals are winning. Their presentation concluded with attendees experiencing a real-time tour of several popular darknet markets.

Mr. Vargas also presented, "Shh...Alexa is Listening" A Security Look at Voice-Based Assistants," in which he highlighted the use of Apple's Siri and Microsoft's Corona, but focused on Amazon's Echo, detailing the security issues surrounding voice-based assistants. He noted that these voice-based assistants have become "friends" as they tell us the weather, know our favorite music, and even make calls for us. We speak to them and they respond; however, as Mr. Vargas observed, the more popular a technology becomes, the more interest it receives from attackers. His presentation introduced attendees to several successful attacks on Amazon echo, including one that allowed Chinese researchers to deliver remote commands to the Echo using frequencies not hearable by the human ear. Mr. Vargas ended by discussing both the potential and the limitations of voice-based assistants as an investigative tool.

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