

## CONVERSATION WITH **BRANDON KEATH**

Cyber security practice lead, Appalachia Technologies

**Q: Take us through a day at work with a cyber security professional.**

**A:** One day you come in to work and all of a sudden you get an alert that a piece of malware has been detected on a network. Then there's some investigation on what triggered that, to figure out if it might be a malicious incident. There is a lot of time spent at the computer, looking through logs. Just like you have cars traversing the highways, on computer systems you have all this information going across the networks and the internet. You're trying to figure out which parts are good traffic and which are bad traffic.

When we're on engagements, sometimes we're trying to pretend to be the adversary and hack into someone's computer system. We'll show up in a suit, or saying we're from Verizon, and see if we can get into someone's data center or their computer system. A lot of people think hackers and cyber security professionals are these underground people in hoodies, but most of them are the people

**Brandon Keath, 29,** is the cyber security practice leader for Mechanicsburg-based Appalachia Technologies. He is the founder of PAHackers, which brings together cyber security professionals for discussion and training.

Keath holds a bachelor's degree in IT with a concentration in applications development from Central Penn College and a master's in cyber security and information assurance from Western Governor's University, as well as numerous industry certifications.

He lives in Mechanicsburg. Cyber security is something of a family affair, as Keath has a brother, Brent, who lives in the area and works in the field.



in suits. They're highly educated, both on the "good guy" and the "bad guy" end.

Most criminal enterprises are shifting toward cybercrime as their main source of revenue. By 2022 cybercrime is going to outpace the drug trade in revenue.

**How does PAHackers, which you founded, help the business community at large?**

PAHackers is a grassroots project to help bring cyber security professionals together

so we can communicate and collaborate and really expand our skill sets. There's a big lack of qualified cyber security professionals right now; the skills gap keeps getting larger and larger and there just aren't enough people to fill these roles. PAHackers helps alleviate some of that by providing training that's free and helping professionals communicate. We're going to win if we work together; we're going to lose if we're divided.

**How can businesses strike the proper balance of security without locking out important communication?**

You're always going to have to maintain a balance of the amount of security you have versus the amount of productivity. When you add security it doesn't make things easier to do. One of best things for small organizations is to try to focus on the areas that will give them the biggest bang for the buck, making sure systems are up to date, patching properly. Firewalls are great but aren't always the answer. If you're relying on firewalls to block traffic, the malicious actors are making their traffic look just what it needs to look like to bypass firewalls.

**If you weren't in cyber security, money being no object, what kind of work would you be doing?**

I would be doing the exact same thing I'm doing now. I love my job every day and I feel like I'm really making a difference.

— Jennifer Deinlein, contributing writer

## Calendar

**Harrisburg Young Professionals, First Friday happy hour:** 5:30-7:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 1, Harrisburg; free; details: social@hyp.org.

**Harrisburg Regional chamber, Harrisburg Regional Economic Forecast:** 8-10 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 6, Swatara Township; keynote speaker Malcolm Polley, president and chief investment officer of Stewart Capital Advisors LLC; members \$65, non-members \$90; details: www.harrisburgregionalchamber.org.

**York County Economic Alliance, SCORE small business roundtable:** 8-9:30 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 6, York; peer group discussion facilitated by a SCORE expert; free; details: Mike Bingham, mbngm@comcast.net.

**Pa. Chamber of Business and Industry, annual budget briefing:** 8:30-10 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 6, Harrisburg; presentations

from Pa. Budget Secretary Jen Swails and Pa. Revenue Secretary Daniel Hassell; members free; details: www.pachamber.org.

**Shippensburg Area chamber, marketing focus group:** 8:30-9:30 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 6, Shippensburg Township; "Collateral roundtable," bring printed collateral for group discussion and brainstorming; free; details: www.shippensburg.org.

**Hanover Area chamber, workshop:** 9-11:30 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 6, Gettysburg; learn how to save energy at your facility; free; details: www.hanoverchamber.com.

**Northern Lancaster County chamber, Wellness Wednesday:** noon-1 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 6, Ephrata; "Eating on the run: healthy lunches and snacks," presented by registered dietician Fran Hadley; members free, nonmembers \$10; details: www.northernlancasterchamber.org.

**York County Economic Alliance, member orientation:** 9-10:30 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 7, York; overview of YCEA events, programs and committees; free; details: Michaela Cumor, 717-771-4579 or mcumor@yceapa.org.

**Carlisle Area chamber, elected officials night:** 5-7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 7, Carlisle; meet the elected officials serving the Carlisle area; members \$25, non-members \$35; details: www.carlislechamber.org.

**Harrisburg Young Professionals, CEO roundtable series:** 7:30-9 a.m., Friday, Feb. 8, Harrisburg; featured speaker Lieutenant Colonel Mark O'Neill of the Army National Guard, ticket required; members free, nonmembers \$16; details: www.hyp.org.

### SUBMITTING ITEMS

Email calendar items four weeks in advance to calendar@cpbj.com.

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