

# PhD Projects 2024 - Centre of Expertise Cyber Security

## Hactivism: honourable cause or serious threat?

*M. (Marco) Romagna, The Hague University of Applied Sciences – Leiden University*

Hactivism is described as the use of hacking techniques in order to promote a socio-political agenda to bring a change in society. Using diverse theoretical backgrounds rooted in social psychology and criminology, this project investigates:

- the motivations for individuals to engage in hactivism and the process they follow to become hactivists;
- the reasons that prompted them to use hacking as their main form of protest;
- the organizational dynamics within different hactivists' groups and networks.

## Nature and prevention of ransomware

*S.R. (Sifra) Matthijse, The Hague University of Applied Sciences*

This research project will investigate the crime-commission process of ransomware attacks to gain insight into how cybercriminals and victims act and the aspects that are essential for criminals to successfully carry out the crime. Moreover, it will provide a starting point for the development of interventions to counter ransomware.

## Money mules and cybercrime involvement mechanisms

*L.M.J. (Luuk) Bekkers, the Hague University of Applied Sciences*

Money mules are key in the execution of financially-motivated cybercrimes. By using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, this project aims to explain how money mules become involved in cybercriminal networks. Knowledge on this matter can be used to disrupt criminal activities and thus help prevent cybercrime victimization among civilians and businesses.

## The intersection between the Internet of Things and cybercrime-as-a-service

*H. (Hannah) Kool, Nederlands Studiecentrum Criminaliteit en Rechtshandhaving (NSCR)*

This research will examine the decision-making process of cyber offenders targeting IoT devices for illicit purposes. The goal is to get insights in the cybercrime-as-a-service markets which focusses on targeting IoT devices. To do so, expert interviews will be held and characteristics of a cybercrime-as-a-service markets will be examined.

## Ethics of care as a corporate governance model

*J. (Jasmijn) Boeken, The Hague University of Applied Sciences – Leiden University*

Putting the social in the technical can be considered an act of care. In this PhD project, a corporate governance model that facilitates security by design is suggested. Defining security by design in a new, broader way, the social aspects of cybersecurity are included. Care ethics will be the theoretical lens in this research. It distinguishes itself by looking at relationships, empowerment and the obligation of care.

## Pathways into financial-economic cyber-enabled crime, and prevention strategies against it

*J. (Joeri) Loggen, The Hague University of Applied Sciences*

Cybercrime is a growing threat worldwide. However, research into this relatively new phenomenon remains underdeveloped—especially regarding initiation and desistance processes. This project aims to get a better understanding of the steps a person takes before becoming involved in cybercrime, and to develop and evaluate an intervention aimed at disrupting this process.

## Follow the Honey: real world experiments on cybercriminal decision-making

*D. (Danielle) Stibbe, Nederlands Studiecentrum Criminaliteit en Rechtshandhaving (NSCR)*

To what extent do cybercriminals take into account costs and benefits in their target selection? In this project, we test hypotheses from criminological decision-making theories in a real-world cybercriminal environment by utilizing innovative research techniques to try to answer this question.

## Alternative interventions for online fraud: Future implications

*M.A.G. (Merel) van Leuken, The Hague University of Applied Sciences*

The criminal justice system at present seems insufficiently equipped to offer an outcome that meets the needs of victims of online fraud. An alternative intervention for the settlement of online fraud has been developed. Victims of online fraud can claim financial compensation by holding the beneficiary account holder (i.e. the recipient of the money) liable through a civil legal representative. This study aims to establish how this alternative intervention works in the Netherlands, what (un)intended consequences it has for victims, offenders and society, and how potential risks can be reduced.