

THE HOMELAND SECURITY SECRETARY'S MORNING BRIEFING

MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 2011 5:00 AM EDT

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Feds Seek Recruits At Vegas Hacker Convention. [NBC Nightly News](#) (8/7, story 6, 2:35, Quintanilla, 8.37M), noting the recent cyberattack on US law enforcement agencies by Anonymous, reports on the federal government's effort to recruit young hackers at the DefCon convention in Las Vegas. Dickie George, head of the NSA's directorate for information assurance, "says the agency is looking to hire nearly 3,000 cyber experts in the next two years, and the computer whizzes at places like that Las Vegas Hacker Convention are made to order." George is shown saying: "We need them. There are too few people on our side right now."

The [New York Times](#) (8/8, Sengupta, Subscription Publication, 950K) reports that while "federal agents have been hanging out at hacker gatherings for years to snoop," this year, "they came with another purpose: to schmooze, impress and, perhaps ultimately, lure. The United States Cyber Command, the Pentagon's Internet defense arm, 'has a work force issue,' said Daron Hartvigsen, special agent with the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. 'We have needs that some in this community can solve. We need folks with skills.'" Ryan Pittman, who works for the Army's criminal investigations division, said federal agents hoped to use the convention to tear down the image that they are a bunch of "jackbooted thugs." Ahmed Saleh, a computer crime investigator with NASA, said a federal IT security job could be appealing "if you're a geek and you want to catch the bad guys."

The [AP](#) (8/8, Subscription Publication) reports, "This year's DefCon featured what some hardcore attendees might consider to be a startling sight: children. For the first time, DefCon included discussions and tutorials for budding hackers, ages 8 to 16." The AP notes that "over two days, they met prominent hackers, Homeland Security officials and NSA security experts." The government's presence at the convention is also noted by [Reuters](#) (8/8, Subscription Publication).

On its website, [CNN](#) (8/8, Sutter) reports, “In the ‘Meet the Feds’ session, representatives from NASA, the Department of Homeland Security, the National Security Agency and the Navy told the kids they were smart to pick up hacking skills early because the government needs employees who can hack. Several kids raised their hands to ask about hacking as a career path.”

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