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Bermuda group impresses at cyber-risk event

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Published Jul 7, 2016 at 8:00 am (Updated Jul 6, 2016 at 7:16 pm)






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Cyber warriors: the Bermuda team, from second left, are Noel Pearman, Victoria Edmonds, Sarah Spurling and Giles Harlow. They are flanked by tutors Abel Sanchez and John Williams (Photograph supplied)

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A team from Bermuda took second spot in a cyber-risk competition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The four-strong team from the island's insurance industry tied for second place with a presentation titled Insurance Innovation: Managing Cyber Risk at a course at the university.

The team was made up of three vice-presidents of professional lines, Victoria Edmonds from Markel Global Insurance, Sarah Spurling of Endurance Specialty Insurance and Noel Pearman from XL Catlin, as well as Giles Harlow, vice-president at Aon Professional Risk Solutions.

Ms Edmonds said: "The course provided a basic framework for professionals making cybersecurity decisions and individuals wanting an in-depth immersion in cybersecurity issues."

She added: "The course gave the students and opportunity to interact with MIT professors and a multinational group of 36 attendees representing financial services, small- to medium-sized IT companies, the Fortune 100 as well as representatives from law enforcement."

A total of 12 countries were represented at the conference, including Britain, US, Spain, Germany, India, and Bangladesh.

Ms Edmonds said that top security experts from major firms like Dunkin' Donuts and Akamai gave lectures on their experience in the field and strategy.

She added: "This was later followed by discussions on cyber warfare and network security tools. It was a great experience and I'm happy that Bermuda is interested and willing to invest in this space."

Ms Spurling said: "The intensive course was a great opportunity to be updated on the most current topics in cyber."

"The speakers ranged from hackers to law enforcement and provided a broad spectrum of viewpoints, helping to make the course extremely relevant to representatives from the Bermuda insurance market."

Mr Pearman added that having four representatives from the island insurance industry at the last month's four-day course, underlined the Bermuda market's commitment to investing in local expertise.

Mr Harlow said: "The final presentation from the Bermuda market attendees showcased the Bermuda industry's willingness and ability to innovate in this dynamic risk class to address the needs of the clients we serve."

About a quarter of the course covered technical areas, but Ms Edmonds said a background in engineering or computing was not needed.

Sessions also covered information security, ethical and legal practices, and mitigating cyber vulnerabilities.

Participants learnt about the process of incident response and analysis, with the aim of ensuring the privacy, reliability, and integrity of information systems.

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