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Toronto firms plan Black Hat-style security conference

SECTor to focus on "underground" threats, organizers say

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by *Shane Schick*

While the RSA Security conference gets underway in San Francisco this week, a group of Toronto consulting firms are planning a local event that will focus on the "underground" threats that face enterprise networks.

CMS Consulting, Digital Defence and Third Brigade are among the hosts of [Security Education Conference Toronto \(SECTor\)](#), to be held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre Nov. 20-21. The organizers have put out a call for presenters and are currently seeking Gold and Silver sponsors. The upcoming conference was recently announced at the Toronto Area Security Klatch (TASK), which is also organized by CMS and other consulting firms

Toronto is already home to a number of security-themed events, most prominently the InfoSecurity Canada show, which is scheduled for June 12-14 at the same location. But Brian Bourne, president of

[CMS Consulting](#), said attendees should have no difficulty distinguishing between the two events.

"We're really looking at the kind of things you'd see at the Black Hat conference," he said, referring to an annual gathering that highlights hacker techniques and malware creation. "It's much more focused on education rather than exhibiting products."

Unlike trade shows, SECTor aims to curb vendors that sponsor the show to use their influence to drive home a specific message, added Robert Buren, CMS Consulting's vice-president of marketing. "You don't want (a keynote speech) to turn into a product pitch," he said.

SECTor topics could include the rise of zero-day attacks, which take advantage of a security vulnerability on the same day that the vulnerability becomes generally known, and fuzzing tools that systematically change the data sent to an application such as a browser to see whether the software correctly handles corrupted input.

Bourne and Buren said they would try to keep SECTor focused by limiting the number of attendees to 500 registrants. The two see the conference as a way of expanding the work of TASK, which in little more than two years has grown to 1,700 members.

“It speaks to what people are really interested in,” said Bourne.

Third Brigade CTO Brian O’Higgins, who is based in Ottawa, said there have been few Black Hat-like conferences apart from one that was once used by the office of the Canadian Security Establishment, which ended several years ago.

“A lot of people can’t always travel to Black Hat,” he said, adding that SECTor will likely avoid some of the more controversial issues around publishing malware research that Black Hat has. “It will have less of a hacker edge and be more around learning.”

Comment: info@itbusiness.ca



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Do you think companies are doing enough to protect customer data from security breaches?

- Yes. Nothing can be a 100 per cent secure and companies are doing their best given limited resources.
- No. The recent security lapses at CIBC and TJX’s Winners and HomeSense are a prime example of the way companies are failing to protect data.

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