

Report from COINS event in Stockholm 2015



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Abstract

It was held three IT security seminars in Stockholm in October 2015. The seminars were funded for COINS Ph.D. students. The events were held consecutively:

- October 17-19 – COINS Ph.D. seminar
- October 19-21 – NordSec
- October 20-23 – CySep

The NordSec and CySep slightly overlapped. The Ph.D. seminar and the NordSec conference were both located at KTH Stockholm, while the CySep event was held in Kista outside of Stockholm. This report will highlight some of the presentations, but first of all, focus on the Author's personal experience from the conferences.

COINS Ph.D. seminar.

The Ph.D. seminar was closely interconnected with the NordSec conference and is an opportunity for Ph.D. students to exchange experience.

The first section of the seminar was introduced by Hanno Langweg. He made a task force of Ph.D. students to come up with ways to integrate new COINS students. The most important aspect that came out of this, was to give new students information about COINS, by establishing contact points and informational handbooks.

A former Ph.D. student Ebenezer Paintsil continued the program by giving guidelines to the transition from being a student to an employee. Job opportunities were also discussed.

A list of Ph.D. students presented their current work and got feedback from professors and colleagues. This opened up a panel discussion about the different topics presented.

The first day was finished at with dinner in a local Chinese restaurant in Stockholm.

The second day started up with group discussions and election of student representatives.

Oleksandr Kazymyrov presented his experience as a former Ph.D. student and gave some advice in how to solve general problems as a Ph.D. student.

After a nice lunch, the seminar ended with group discussions about how to introduce new Ph.D. students to COINS.

As a new student, this seminar had a lot of learning outcome. It was well organized and was a great opportunity to get in contact with other Ph.D. students for other Universities.

NordSec.

The NordSec conference addressed a wide range of relevant IT security research. Due to the variance of different topics, only a two of the presentations are highlighted.

Eugene Spafford held an interesting talk about IT security in general and raised questions about what security really is and how it can be measured. The topics he discussed were common IT security failures and the relation between practical security in the industry and the academia. He focused on never to spend more money on security than you can

tolerate. Another aspect of his talk was the uncertainty and non-defined state of security.

For a researcher working with virtualized networks, like the Author, the most interesting presentation was about securing SDN. Unfortunately, the key author was not able to come, but a co-researcher from Nokia presented their work. Their focus was about security in SDN clouds used in mobile core networks.

The conference had long breaks and plenty of opportunities to get in touch with the other attendants. The last evening KTH held an impressive dinner at an Art Gallery in Stockholm. A speech was held between the courses, that was from a personal perspective was both entertaining and informative in respect of the history of KTH and NordSec. These late evening events are highly appreciated and a great place to discuss both the details in the Ph.D. work and gain experience in general.

CySep.

The first days of CySep were in conflict with the NordSec event. The Author prioritized the SDN presentations at NordSec and was not able to be present from the start of the conference.

None of the talks were directly related to virtualized network, but it is always interesting to discover and learn about new topics. The theory behind quantum computers was especially interesting. This technology can break the basics of the security most of the world is based on.

The main attraction of the event was Bruce Schneier. He held an interesting talk about surveillance. It was a general disappointment that he did not have the opportunity to come to Stockholm, but he was able to hold his talk over Skype. His intentions were to raise the general awareness of how our society is

affected by global surveillance by the government and large companies.

CySep arranged a social event with a boat-trip the evening before the last conference day. There were no formal agenda, but a great way to get in contact with other researchers and Ph.D. students.

What really made the last day of the conference interesting was a lively presentation by two female adult movie stars. They presented their latest personal discovery within their business. With no clothes, they showed how their acts presents the next generation security of threats. Unfortunately, this presentation never took place, but represents the Authors dreams during the end of the conference. In respect of the Authors interest, the last day talks were not related to security of virtual networks. In general terms, it also difficult to stay focused more than five or six days doing conferencing.

Personal outcome and conclusions.

The Authors personal intentions of attending such conference as the NordSec and CySep, are in general, to experience the conference setup, content and quality. But, first of all, it is about gaining more knowledge and get in contact with other researchers. Some of the non-related research areas can be difficult to understand, but triggers curiosity in the different areas of research in information security.

One of the talks at NordSec triggered the Author to get in contact with another researcher in Germany. This has resulted in a collaboration between the Authors research at NTNU and foreign universities. Hence, the social aspects and the discussions outside the conference room were appreciated the most.

It is an interesting fact, that two researchers with two beers in a hot-tub can learn more from each other, than staying one day listening to a conference.