The Virginia Alliance for Secure Computing and Networking (VA SCAN) exists for the purpose of strengthening information technology security programs within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Alliance was formed in response to Governor Mark Warner's charge to Virginia Higher Education to help the state meet cybersecurity goals outlined in his 2002 Commonwealth of Virginia IT Strategic Plan. The initial focus of the Alliance is security programs within Virginia Higher Education; extending outreach to K-12s and state and local governments is under consideration.

Download the VA SCAN brochure.

The Alliance brings together Virginia higher education security practitioners, who developed and maintain security programs widely emulated by other institutions, and researchers responsible for creating cybersecurity instruction and research programs nationally recognized for excellence. VA SCAN is made up of security professionals from George Mason University, James Madison University, the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, and the Virginia Commonwealth University as well as researchers and staff from the Center for Security Information Systems at George Mason University, the Institute for Infrastructure and Information Assurance at James Madison University, and the joint George Mason/James Madison Critical Infrastructure Protection Project.

The Alliance benefits to the Commonwealth are:

- immediate gains realized by leveraging field-proven security tools and best practices and staff expertise; and
- future improvements brought about through close linkages of these existing methods and knowledgebase with cybersecurity research, instruction, and federal and state government initiatives.

In addition, the members agree the operational activities of the alliance should be guided by these principles:

- We will teach and guide clients to develop and maintain strong security programs; we will not develop and maintain programs for them.
- We will base alliance offerings on state and federal standards, and those offerings will support the

VA SCAN began offering products and services in March of 2003. These offerings are based upon the principle that the most lasting improvements to security programs can be made not by performing security functions for organizations, but rather by educating and guiding management and staff teams in defining and carrying out their own security strategies and ongoing security operations. Initial offerings include:

- Security instructional materials and on-site training
- Consulting in the forms of an "ask the expert" email service and on-site consulting engagements on a variety of security topics
- A web-based toolkit of security tools and best practices
- A self-assessment checklist for Commonwealth of Virginia security standards
- Information resources provided through:
  - a moderated mail list for general security discussions,
  - a VA-CIRT group for tracking new threats,
  - periodic information sharing meetings and workshops, and
  - linkages to other information sources

Researchers affiliated with VA SCAN are developing a comprehensive secure university model responsive to Commonwealth and Federal security regulations and guidelines. When completed, this research will drive further development of alliance products and services.
objectives of federal and state information sharing.

- Our offerings will reflect the business need to balance security risks and other organizational priorities.
- Our offerings will promote the notion that security is not just a technical issue. It is a concern should be transfused into everything an organization does.
- Research will be used to keep offerings on the cutting edge.
- Cooperation will transcend competition.

VA SCAN partners are advised by representatives from other Virginia institutions. Advisor institutions currently include:

- The College of William and Mary
- Radford University
- University at Mary Washington
- The Virginia Institute of Marine Science

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