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## New type of crime, new kind of career

Hickory Daily Record Editorial

Cyber-crime students at Catawba Valley Community College got a first-hand introduction to a technical service that will become increasingly vital to security.

Students of the Cyber Crime and Information Security curriculum taught by Tom Foss spent 16 months evaluating Claremont's digital security. They found the town is relatively safe in some areas, vulnerable in others.

Working with town employees, the students reached conclusions that enabled Claremont to tighten its security.

The digital age has provided means of communication, information gathering and entertainment that were only dreams a few decades ago. Individuals, businesses and governments are linked by a network of computers and computer-based devices that provide instant communication and data sharing.

Trouble is, the technology has given rise to cyber crime. Stealing identities and privileged data is big business. Spyware, trojans, worms and viruses are common. For many hackers, trying to bring down a network or dispense a disruptive, destructive virus is fun.

Some viruses are designed to assault competing businesses or as terrorist attacks.

Note the invasion of U.S. and South Korean government computer networks, purportedly by North Korea.

International terrorism is not just for bomb-planting, gut-toting zealots anymore. Cyber terrorists use computers and never have to leave home to assault targets half a world away.

The students at CVCC learned that security â personal, corporate, private and governmental â is an important issue, and the digital tug of war will not go away.

We are a technological civilization. Our electronic wonders allow us to do more in mere moments than, a few years ago, we did in days or weeks.

The challenge is to protect our privacy and critical information from intruders. It's not easy, as Claremont â and the U.S. government â discovered.

Security is more than bright lights and fences. We require whiz kids like the CVCC students and experts like Foss to keep us safe.

Armies, government agencies, schools and homes need digital savvy to cope these days. And we can't wait until something breaks. Cyber security is preventive.

It's good to know a new generation of students are being trained as cyber sleuths. The digital gizmos we can't live without have given rise to a different sort of crime and criminology and vital service-sector careers.