



ARMY CYBER INSTITUTE

AT WEST POINT

Army Cyber Institute releases Science Fiction Prototypes

Series of short graphic novels provides a unique vision of possible future threats.

West Point, N.Y.: "Operation Dark Hammer," a series of short graphic novels produced by the Army Cyber Institute at West Point, is now available online. Each of the novels challenges Soldiers to think about possible future threats posed by cyber. As technology continues to enhance military capabilities, adversaries and competitors will seek to exploit vulnerabilities. These thought-provoking science fiction prototypes are intended to inspire conversations about future threats.

The U.S. Army has always sought to prevent strategic surprise by anticipating and adapting to future capabilities and vulnerabilities. The fictional works are prototypes in that they do not portray nor predict actual events. Rather, they are science fiction stories based on future trends, technologies, economics and cultural change.

The inspiration for each story came from "Threatcasting" research by the Army Cyber Institute and Arizona State University. After identifying specific ways in which technology might be exploited to attack the military and civilians, ACI's research team met with current military leaders to discuss today's technology trends and their impact on military operations. Based on this research, ACI commissioned a creative team of writers and illustrators to produce the series.

The U.S. Army has a long history of using comics to provide technical information to Soldiers. "PS Magazine" has been a staple of Army motorpools for decades. [According to Army.mil](http://www.army.mil), it provides Soldiers the latest maintenance information in clear, highly focused and highly readable language with the use of cartoon characters and the techniques of sequential art. The Army Cyber Institute is researching how similar publications might motivate Soldiers and students to think about concerns in the cyber domain. The ACI invites feedback on the works at the contact information below.

Three short graphic novels have been released. "Operation Dark Hammer" envisions a scenario in which a unique digital capability prevents a conflict from descending into chaos. "11.25.27" looks at how a fully-automated supply chain might be disrupted with lethal consequences. "Silent Ruin" portrays the disastrous result of an unknown vulnerability. A fourth story, "Engineering a Traitor," will be released in the coming weeks.

The Army Cyber Institute's ongoing Threatcasting project is intended to help the Army understand and prioritize necessary cyber research. It is a conceptual framework that enables groups of practitioners and academics to envision future threats and systematically plan to



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mitigate vulnerabilities. The Army Cyber Institute and Arizona State University host the Threatcasting workshops and produce detailed reports emphasizing technical challenges not currently being researched. Each workshop brings together a diverse group to think about the future. Persons with a unique perspective on cyber and interested in participating in a Threatcasting workshop are encouraged to contact ACI (information below).

The Army Cyber Institute at West Point is the U.S. Army's cyber think tank, navigating and prioritizing cyber research and providing niche research capabilities. This enables the Army to better understand cyber conflict and prevent strategic surprise. The ACI develops public-private relationships on research problems of mutual interest, so the Army may better prevent and prepare for future cyber conflict. ACI's research also supports the development of cyber education programs throughout the Army and enhances the Army's cyber leader development model, ensuring that future leaders understand the cyber domain.

The graphic novels, Threatcasting reports, and more information may be found at cyber.army.mil. Contact the Army Cyber Institute at contact.cyber@usma.edu and follow us on Twitter: @ArmyCyberInst. For more on PS Monthly, check out https://www.army.mil/article/60747/ps_magazine_has_informed_entertained_for_six_decades.