Heather Adkins: keeping hackers out

My name is Heather Adkins. I'm director of information security and privacy here at Google. And our job is to keep the hackers out. Every day at Google for me is a new day. It's like a new job every day. Hackers are very interesting and very diverse in the way that they do things. They're either hacking for fun and fame because they're intellectually curious and they want to understand how things work. Or they're hacking for money because they want to steal money from people or they're hacking because they want to steal information. And so for us we try to understand how the hackers work so that we can understand what kinds of things we have to do to prevent them from doing it. You have to understand how the internals work, you have to understand how the programmer built it, and this is really thrilling. You get to ride alongside the programmer and understand what they were thinking when they were designing the software and anticipate what mistakes they might have made. We prepare for being hacked by understanding how hacking works. And this is often the most exciting part of our work because we get to break the systems and I think a lot of us who get into the field think what would it be like to rob a bank, what would it be like to hack into a system? And here we get to play the other side of that. So we have hackers of our own who hack our systems and tell us how they did it. And we also study how the actual attackers in the world are hacking other people. I think that the field of security is so exciting for us, those of us who do it as a profession, because it's changing all the time. That presents us with new challenges every single day. And it also appeals to us, I think because it means that we're protecting users. Google has a service offered to billions of people on the planet, and we do it because we want to protect them.

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