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Milwaukee 'hard-core geek' thwarted Internet threat

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Melissa Trujillo Associated Press

MILWAUKEE - Paul Watson thought he saw a security problem that could seriously hurt Internet, and he was willing to spend his nights, weekends - even his vacation - figuring <

"Just putting in hours researching intricacies of protocol and stuff is a lot of fun," Watson Tuesday, soon after landing in Vancouver, British Columbia. <

The 35-year-old Milwaukee man discovered a flaw in the underlying technology for near Internet traffic that, left unaddressed, could be used to seriously disrupt its flow of inform He is expected to explain his findings Thursday at an Internet security convention in Vancouver. <

At a conference last summer, Watson, an information security specialist at Rockwell Automation, heard experts say it wasn't practical to use the security problem to attack th Internet. <

"During their talk, I saw what I thought was a flaw in their logic, asked a brief question, d like the answer and immediately went out by the pool and started the first draft of my research," he said. <

About two months later, his work was nearly done. <

But not before he took two w off to concentrate in his base which Watson said has more 30 computer systems "for recreation." <

"It's his work, it's his hobby, i something he enjoys," said Watson's wife, Cynthia. "He j much lives in the basement."

So she and her husband's colleagues said they were nc surprised he made the disco Paul Watson kept his bosses Rockwell up to date during hi research. <

Watson said he was a little taken aback by all the attention his findings received Tuesda the tech community and governments around the world. <

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Unlike others who intentionally disrupt the Internet, Watson looks to fix the problems he in computer systems. Watson also doesn't fit the quiet, dull stereotype of a hacker, his v said. Besides computers, he enjoys skiing, running and hanging out with their two daugt ages 8 and 13. <

But Paul Watson doesn't mind one stereotype about computer experts. <

"I'm a hard-core geek through and through," he said. "To me, it's the biggest complimen anyone could give me to call me a nerd." <

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