



WELCOME TO ANOTHER ELECTRIFYING SEASON OF CYBER EXCELLENCE!

The Hondo Cyber Owls are back and soaring higher than ever as we kick off our sixth consecutive season in the CyberPatriot competition! This milestone also marks the sixth edition of our official newsletter, The Cyber Talon. Once again, we are diving into the world of cybersecurity with two dynamic teams: a high school team made up of six skilled members and a middle school team featuring three eager newcomers ready to embrace the challenge.

This year, however, the Hondo Cyber Owls are sporting a new identity — meet The Shadow Talons! Inspired by our team number's connection to the James Bond novels by Ian Fleming, we've embraced the spirit of espionage and intrigue with a temporary name change that reflects both mystery and sophistication. Get ready, because we're channeling the cool, calculated flair of 007 throughout this competition!

As CyberPatriot XVII unfolds, both our veteran high school members and newly joined middle schoolers are ready to take on the competition head-on. With the teams officially formed, we're set for an incredible season, filled with opportunities to learn, compete, and grow.

In this edition of The Cyber Talon, we're proud to feature a special article from our very own team captain, "Number One." It's a fantastic read, providing insight into our team's passion for cybersecurity and our commitment to helping others learn and thrive in this ever-evolving field.

Meanwhile, The Shadow Talons (Cyber Owls) — our extended cyber family — are making big moves on the cybersecurity front. From participating in Capture the Flag (CTF) competitions and attending cybersecurity conferences to collaborating with the Medina Valley AFJROTC CyberPatriot team, we are steadily gaining momentum. But our adventure doesn't end with CyberPatriot! We're developing new and exciting initiatives that will take us beyond the current season — so stay tuned for more thrilling updates!

This year, we take on the competition with the precision and style of James Bond. Let's make this season unforgettable!

Cyber Like a Viking!
Coach Frank "The Cyber Viking" Hall



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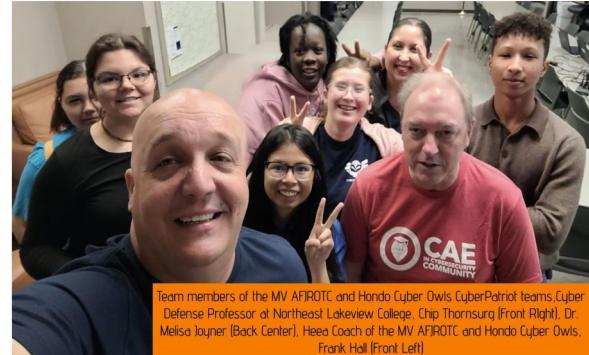
"BY THE END OF THE DAY, THE COMPETITION WASN'T JUST ABOUT SCORES — IT WAS A CELEBRATION OF COLLABORATION, LEARNING, AND GROWTH."



HONDO SHADOW TALONS SOAR IN SPACE GRAND CHALLENGE ALONGSIDE MEDINA VALLEY CYBERPATRIOTS

On April 27, 2024, the Hondo Shadow Talons joined forces with the Medina Valley AFJROTC CyberPatriot team to compete in the highlight event of the 2023-2024 cyber season — the Cal Poly California Cybersecurity Institute's Space Grand Challenge Capture the Flag Competition! This high-stakes event was the perfect finale for both teams, offering an exciting blend of challenge, teamwork, and growth in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

The day kicked off with a motivational visit from Chip Thornsburg, Cyber Defense Professor at Northeast Lakeview College. Professor Thornsburg provided actionable insights into defense strategies and highlighted the college's cybersecurity programs, opening new doors for our cyber warriors as they plan their paths toward professional careers in the field. His words ignited a spark of ambition among both teams, reminding us of the importance of continued learning and skill-building. Once the competition began, the Shadow Talons and CyberPatriots faced early hurdles but demonstrated their resilience and adaptability as they navigated a simulated virtual space station. Each task pushed the limits of our knowledge, demanding quick thinking, teamwork, and problem-solving. The thrill of overcoming complex challenges fueled our determination, making every solved flag a shared victory.



Team members of the MV AFJROTC and Hondo Cyber Owls CyberPatriot teams. Cyber Defense Professor of Northeast Lakeview College, Chip Thornsburg (Front Right), Dr. Melisa Jouner (Back Center), Head Coach of the MV AFJROTC and Hondo Cyber Owls, Frank Hall (Front Left)



Former Medina Valley AFJROTC CyberPatriot Team Captain Henry Niño (Right)
Head Coach of the MV AFJROTC and Hondo Cyber Owls Frank Hall (Left)

Adding to the excitement was a special visit from Henry Niño, former Team Captain of the Medina Valley AFJROTC CyberPatriot team. His return was a powerful moment for both teams, reflecting the legacy and impact of these programs. Henry shared his experiences and offered advice, encouraging the next generation of cyber defenders to uphold the spirit and excellence that define our community.

By the end of the day, the competition wasn't just about scores — it was a celebration of collaboration, learning, and growth. Both the Hondo Shadow Talons and Medina Valley CyberPatriots walked away with stronger bonds, sharper skills, and a shared determination to conquer future challenges in cybersecurity.

As we look ahead, the spirit of this competition will inspire our continued journey, reinforcing that every challenge is an opportunity to learn, evolve, and rise higher — together. The Hondo Shadow Talons are ready for whatever comes next. Fly high, Talons!

CYBERPATRIOT XVII COMPETITION SCHEDULE

Here is the complete CyberPatriot XVII Image Release and Competition Schedule. The Shadow Talon teams will compete on Sundays for each round, which is the final day of each competition window. Practices will continue every Saturday throughout the season.

CyberPatriot 17 (2024-2025) Competition Timeline

REGISTRATION DEADLINES	TRAINING ROUNDS	MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION COMPETITION ROUNDS	HIGH SCHOOL DIVISIONS COMPETITION ROUNDS
April 1 Team Registration Opens 20% discount for teams registered by July 1	Exhibition Round May 16 – August 15	Introductory Round November 14 – 17	Round 1 October 24 – 27
October 2 Team Registration Closes Last day to add new teams	Training Round 1 (Basic Level) September 6 – October 7	State Round December 12 – 15	Round 2 November 14 – 17
October 23 Roster Finalization Last day to add new competitors	Sneak Preview (Optional Test) September 19	Semifinals January 23 – 25 (3 days only)	State Round December 12 – 15
November 6 Payment Due Last day to pay registration fee	Practice Round October 10 – 20	National Finals (In-Person event, Bethesda, MD) March 14 – 18, 2025	Semifinals January 23 – 25 (3 days only)
	Training Round 2 (Intermediate Level) October 31 – December 10	National Finals (In-Person event, Bethesda, MD) March 14 – 18, 2025	National Finals (In-Person event, Bethesda, MD) March 14 – 18, 2025

CYBERPATRIOT TEAM ADVANCEMENT:

The CyberPatriot competition consists of several rounds:

Round 1 & Round 2: Both rounds are qualification rounds open to all teams, regardless of prior participation.

State Round: All teams are eligible, but they must compete in their designated skill tier – Platinum (top 30%), Gold (middle 40%), or Silver (bottom 30%) – based on cumulative scores from Rounds 1 and 2. Tier placement is permanent for the rest of the season, and only the Platinum Tier can qualify for the National Finals.

Semifinals: The top 25% of teams in each tier, based on State Round scores, advance to the Semifinals. Wildcard entries are granted if fewer than six teams from any category



"ALL TEAMS ARE ELIGIBLE, BUT THEY MUST COMPETE IN THEIR DESIGNATED SKILL TIER – PLATINUM (TOP 30 PERCENT), GOLD (MIDDLE 40 PERCENT), OR SILVER (BOTTOM 30 PERCENT) – BASED ON CUMULATIVE SCORES FROM ROUNDS 1 AND 2"



“MEDIA LITERACY IS CRUCIAL TO FUTURE DECISIONS, RESPONSES TO CURRENT EVENTS, AND THE EVERYDAY USE OF TECHNOLOGY.”



the CYBER VIKING SYSLOGS MEDIA LITERACY BY JESSICA “NUMBER 1” COUNSELMAN

One Google search is all it takes to get hundreds of articles on thousands of topics from millions of people. With this mass accumulation of media, the ability to tell the difference between true and false information is exceedingly significant. In walks Media Literacy. Media literacy is the ability to analyze stories presented in the mass media critically and determine their accuracy or credibility. Media literacy isn't just an internet concept and the practices I will be covering later on can and should be applied in other forms of media. The utilization of media to influence a population's views, state of mind, and actions has been around for hundreds of years. One example is "Yellow journalism," which had a significant impact during the Spanish-American War, also known as the "Media War." In 1898, the U.S.S. Maine battleship exploded while anchored in Havana Harbor, resulting in the deaths of 266 individuals. The ship had been sent to prevent illegal arms trading and protect Americans while Cuba fought for independence from Spain. The response to this incident included speculation of an external explosion caused by a targeted attack from Spain. Despite unsubstantiated evidence to support this claim, several newspapers, including the New York Journal, assumed Spain's guilt and published an article headlined "The Tragic Work of an Enemy." While yellow journalism may not have initiated the war, it undoubtedly fueled the public's passion for it. As long as there is consumable media, there is a risk of unreliable information. Media literacy is a crucial skill in our daily lives, giving us, as consumers of information, the knowledge and power to make informed decisions.

Media literacy, as defined by Medialit.org, is comprised of 5 core concepts:

1. All media messages are 'constructed'
2. Media messages are created using creative language with its own rules
3. Different people experience the same media message differently
4. Media contains embedded values and points of view
5. Most media messages are organized to generate profit and power.

Media Literacy is crucial to future decisions, responses to current events, and the everyday use of technology. The benefits of media literacy education are colossal compared to the consequences of its absence. With this in mind, the next time you come across a piece of media, ask yourself these questions.

Who created this message?

What creative messages are being used to attract my attention?

How might different people understand this message differently than me?

What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message?

Why is this message being sent?

When looking into the media you are consuming, it's important to remember Who, When, Where, Why, and How. These practices may seem elementary yet it is paramount to remember to verify everything. It is key to look carefully. Not only will it give you accurate information, it will grant you the state of mind of knowing what is going on. Nevertheless, these tips aren't just for news articles, they are for all kinds of media.

When you're sifting through information, don't take information at face value; analyze it to find out if it is true.

Citations:

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PICTURES OF THE HONDO CYBER OWLS



2024-2025 HONDO CYBER OWLS



MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAM

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**HONDO CYBER OWLS
CYBERPATRIOT TEAM**

WE MONITOR NETWORKS BY SOARING THROUGH CYBER-SPACE HUNTING FOR PREY. WE USE OUR TALONS AS A DETERRENT TO PROTECT OUR DATA. USING ADVANCED DETECTION TECHNIQUES, WE SPREAD OUR WINGS AND LAUNCH PRECISE COUNTER MEASURES TO DEFEND OUR NETWORKS AGAINST CYBER ENEMIES. WE FIND, CAPTURE, AND ANNIHILATE ALL CYBER THREATS. WE ARE THE CYBER OWLS!

**HONDO CYBER OWLS
CYBERPATRIOT TEAM**

WEB PAGE:
https://hondo-tx.org/library/cyber_owls.php

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ANGELA M. HALL—
CHIEF EDITOR OF THE
CYBER TALON



ABOUT THE HONDO CYBERPATRIOT TEAM



The Vision

The vision of the Hondo Cyber Owls CyberPatriot program is to promote cyber awareness, computer security practices, and cyber ethics. All of these are essential attributes for creating a secure network infrastructure, teaching the students how to detect threats, and how to defend against cyber-attacks in a safe virtual environment.

The skills and knowledge the students will gain from participating in this program will give them an advantage to obtain information technology certifications, scholarships in computer related fields of study, and ultimately provide an opportunity to start a great career in information technology and cyber security.

The Mission

The mission of the Hondo Cyber Owls CyberPatriot program is the proper instruction and implementation of information technology principals and cyber security practices. All students will be taught how to use various operating systems, interconnecting network devices, and how to secure the entire infrastructure. The students will also be taught how to properly use tools and methodologies to assess and troubleshoot problems that range from inoperable workstations to misconfigured networking equipment. These are the skills that will be necessary to compete in the CyberPatriot competitions and will enable us to advance to each round and ultimately to the national finals.