Recent well-publicized computer system security breaches experienced by institutions ranging from Facebook to the Federal Reserve are prompting increased interest in and spending on Cybersecurity.

According to Bloomberg News, U.S. companies and public sector organizations will raise outlays on computer security to almost $90 billion in 2013, more than double expenditures in 2006. Financial giant JPMorgan Chase alone indicates it will spend roughly $200 million on data safety and security, employing 600 people.

With few specialists as yet trained to respond to evolving attacks, demand currently is overwhelming supply and cybersecurity has emerged as one of the fastest growing job categories nationwide as well as globally. Since 2007, U.S. job listings for cybersecurity positions increased 73 percent or 3.5 times faster than postings for computer jobs as a whole.

With all of these factors in mind, Florida lawmakers during their most recent legislative session authorized the University of South Florida to begin working toward the establishment of a Florida Cybersecurity Center at USF. The center eventually will partner with the business community statewide to identify and help to remedy any cybersecurity vulnerabilities as well as to attract financial services, healthcare organizations, defense industries, and other cyber-intensive companies to relocate to or startup within the state.

On Tuesday, Aug. 20, from 9:00 a.m. until noon in Marshall Student Center Room 4200, Sri Sridharan, the newly named managing director of USF’s Cybersecurity Initiative, will be joined by other experts in the field to inform the campus community about efforts to make the university, through the Florida Center for Cybersecurity, the state’s institution of choice and center of excellence for education, research, and outreach in the area of cybersecurity.

By leveraging the academic and research strengths of USF as well as its existing relationships with Central Command (CENTCOM), Special Operations Command (SOCOM), and business and industry in the Tampa Bay region, the Florida Center for Cybersecurity at USF will enhance the size and capabilities of the cybersecurity workforce in Florida and the nation by creating a variety of multidisciplinary educational programs while also facilitating basic and applied research in cybersecurity.

This is a vitally important topic that touches all USF colleges, schools, and many departments in different ways. Cybersecurity is not just technology, but also impacts issues related to advanced communications, criminology, digital information storage, early education, economic development, emergency preparedness, forensics, the law, national and international commerce, privacy, psychology, public policy, regulatory compliance and more.

Please plan to take part in USF’s first Cybersecurity Summit on Aug. 20 and indicate your expected attendance by replying to Kathy Weber at kweber08@usf.edu.

Sri Sridharan
Managing Director of Cybersecurity Initiative