



**WISDOM's London Universities
Women in STEM day**

Thoughts from...

Prof Keith Mayes

**Head of the Information security Group &
Head of the School of Maths and Information Security
Royal Holloway, University of London**

Agenda.....



- Brief overview of the ISG
- The state of information/cyber security resourcing
- Why worry?
- Is quality the problem?
- Stop searching for a magic solution
- Challenges for different groups
- What have we tried
- What might we try



Information Security Group (ISG)



- Since its foundation in **1990** the **ISG** has been a world renowned centre of excellence in information/cyber security research, education and expert advice.
- It is a **GCHQ/EPSRC Centre of Excellence** for research (**ACE-CSR**) and has GCHQ certified education, and hosts one of only two **UK Cyber Security Centres for Doctoral Training (CDT)**, as well as the **Smart Card & IoT Security Centre** and **Systems Security Research Lab**.
- 20+ information/cyber security academic specialist staff
- 12+ Postdoctoral Research Assistants
- 90+ PhD, 450+ (600!) MSc Students
- 10+ Visiting Professors and Fellows
- 4000+ International Alumni



The state of Information/Cyber Security resourcing

- A snapshot, from the start of our focus on gender equality
 - In our UK industry <10% are female
 - In our staff, approx 10% were female (now 20%)
 - Of our PGT students, 15-20% are female
 - The figure is largely static over several years
 - The figure is affected by the gender balance in other countries
- Is there hope for change?
 - Veterinary Science



Why worry?

SHORTAGE

- Cold logic
 - There is a skills shortage in information cyber security
 - This has been recognised by the UK government
 - Graduates have very high employability
 - There is a limited source of students
 - Attracting many more female students will have a big impact on addressing the skills shortage
- Warmer logic
 - A better gender split brings balance and diversity of opinions and experience, to operations.



Is quality the issue?

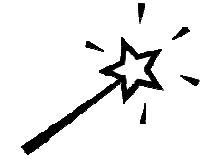
- Absolutely not!
 - Our female students often become our best graduates
 - Prize winning for exams and projects
 - Our female PhD students publish top quality papers
 - Our female staff, are respected, winning fellowships, carrying out high–ranking research, advising industry and providing quality teaching



- So, not the fish we catch, but the ones that get away!



Stop searching for a magic solution



- How many times have you heard .. *“this should be done to solve gender inequality”*?
 - I don’t believe in magic solutions
- I believe in support groups like WISDOM
 - Attracting women to the subject areas
 - Providing critical mass for support, beyond organisational boundaries
 - Providing a louder voice
 - Creating a “snowball” effect for change



Challenges for different groups



- Students
 - Something goes wrong in the 14-18 age range
 - Subject needs to be considered interesting/worthwhile
 - Need to show a good working environment, great career prospects
 - Problems with feeder subjects
- University and Industry staff
 - Fewer female graduates, so fewer female job applicants
 - Fewer female employers means less role models
 - Recruited female employers may feel isolated/lacking support

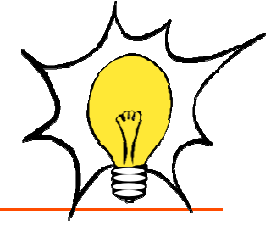


What have we tried

- Staff recruitment
 - Increase of 10%; but difficult to do more
- PGT student recruitment
 - Videos
- PGR student/research recruitment
 - Event sponsorship (women in crypto etc.)
- Support for WISDOM
 - Funding/Encouragement
- Workload reduction on return from maternity leave
- Embedded positive changes in School Board rules



What we might try



- Helping career break professionals
 - Continuity of subject involvement or refresher course
 - Accessible CPD
- Visiting Professors
- Perhaps a fixed term champion for change?
-
- You tell me 😊





**Thank you for your
attention...**

Questions ?

www.isg.rhul.ac.uk

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Royal Holloway
University of London

