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## Cyber Experts Teach How to Shop Smart and Safely this Holiday Season

[LSU Media Center](#)

BATON ROUGE – In preparation for Black Friday and Cyber Monday, LSU cybersecurity expert Abe Baggili and his students share the latest hackable technology and how to protect you and your family this holiday shopping season. Here are some tips:

- ▶ Use a credit card, not a debit card, online because it's not linked to your personal checking account.
- ▶ Don't use platforms that publicize your personal information and location because there will be a lot of fraud that might happen during this time.
- ▶ Don't buy a device just because it's cheap.
- ▶ Before buying, read what other consumers are saying about a product or device and its security.
- ▶ Make sure you are putting a lot of thought into what you're purchasing and the impact the purchase might have on your security and privacy.

In his lab located in LSU's state-of-the-art Patrick F. Taylor Hall, Baggili is teaching a one-of-a-kind course where students get hands-on experience learning how to ethically hack digital devices with the intent to discover where the privacy and security weaknesses are. About a dozen undergraduate and graduate students in Baggili's research-intensive class are working on projects they chose to pursue this semester which will result in publishable research papers. Here are a few of the projects:

[LSU graduate student Sarah Buckley](#) from Mandeville investigates what private information is stored in robot vacuums, such as iRobot's Roomba and Eufy. She discovered that while these devices are cleaning, they are also taking photos throughout your house. To test this function, Buckley laid down in a room while the robot vacuum moved around her throughout the room. The result was some photos of what looks like a dead body in the middle of the room that can be retrieved through the vacuum cleaner's app.

LSU undergraduate student Steven Seiden from Baton Rouge is studying microchips that people implant beneath their skin to open doors and other devices. He's looking into if they are safe and if someone can hack data from them.

In another corner of the classroom, three [LSU cybersecurity graduate students](#) –Lauren Pace from Covington, LaSean Salmon from Metairie and Christopher Bowen from New Orleans – hack into an tile tracker that people use to track and locate their belongings. They were able to hack into the tile tracker at their desk at LSU and make it look like the tracker was in Chicago or New York. This shows how easy it could be for someone to lure you somewhere by making it look like your belongings are at a specific location.

### Media Availability

Media are invited into one of LSU's cybersecurity labs to meet and interview Baggili and his students on **Tuesday, Nov. 22 at 10:15 a.m.** RSVP to Alison Satake at [asatake@lsu.edu](mailto:asatake@lsu.edu) to obtain media credentials for this cybersecurity press visit. B-roll is also available to supplement your news packages.

## Cybersecurity Workforce

In this new cybersecurity and cyber forensics class, Baggili is training the next generation of cybersecurity experts.

"If you're interested in helping people and having a big and lucrative career, you should explore LSU's cybersecurity program," said Baggili, who is a professor in the LSU Division of Computer Science & Engineering and the Center for Computation & Technology.

That is why LSU graduate students Nathalia Soares from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Marcellina Kazigati from Kampala, Uganda chose to come to LSU to study cybersecurity. Soares previously worked in computer fraud in Brazil and Kazigati wants to see how scams work in order to improve companies' security for her career.

LSU is one of only 22 universities in the nation that has been designated by the National Security Agency, the nation's preeminent cybersecurity agency, as a [Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Operations](#).

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