



ACCSS - ACademic Cyber Security Society

Annual Report

2021 (from founding on June 24) - 2022

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1. Foreword

This is the first annual report of the ACademic Cyber Security Society (**ACCSS**), the association founded on June 24, 2021 to maximize the contribution of science to a secure digital society. In this annual report, we as a board look back on our first year as an association and provide insight into what has happened in the year and a half since ACCSS was founded. We also briefly explain our primary areas of focus for 2023.

ACCSS is a scientific association with an ambitious mission that stems from the scientific knowledge and conviction that cybersecurity issues must be addressed with unified efforts. Before we get into the content, however, we would like to express our gratitude as a board for all the support that made it possible for ACCSS to launch and develop its first activities.

Our thanks to all the scientists who advised and assisted us since the very beginning, and continue to shape the association through their contributions on the advisory council and in our work groups. Our special thanks to Aiko Pras and Jan Piet Barthel, who assisted us within the board as first vice president and first business director and are now enjoying a well-deserved retirement.

A special word of thanks also goes to the *Stichting Internet Domeinregistratie Nederland* (**SIDN**: A Dutch association for internet domain registration) for donating the start-up capital that allowed us to establish the association and conduct our first activities.

We would not be where we are today without their contributions.

On behalf of the board,

Bibi van den Berg
President ACCSS

2. Organization Profile

2.1 Vision

ACCSS was founded on the belief that the Dutch scientific community must organize itself in order to best serve society on the topic of cybersecurity. In the run-up to the founding of ACCSS, extensive discussions were held with scientists and stakeholders from a broader societal field about how this vision should be pursued. The outcome is reflected in our founding bylaws.

2.2 Mission

ACCSS aims to promote scientific research and education in the Netherlands that contributes conscientiously and meaningfully to a secure digital society. ACCSS pursues this by focusing on the following three core activities:

1. To connect scientists working on cybersecurity (regardless of their scientific discipline) by strengthening their **network** and facilitating and encouraging interaction and collaboration among them
2. To act as a **gateway** for public and private parties seeking to establish and maintain contact with cybersecurity scientists from all scientific disciplines in the Netherlands
3. To be a **voice** for and representative of cybersecurity scientists from all disciplines in the Netherlands in order to highlight shared viewpoints, provide **input** into policy processes where cybersecurity expertise is needed, and all else that is directly or indirectly related or conducive to this

3. Organization

3.1 General Assembly

The highest governing body of ACCSS is the General Assembly. This assembly is formed by all registered voting members of the association. The association has two types of memberships: individual members and institutional members. Both individuals and institutions can apply through the ACCSS website.

3.2 Individual members

At the end of the first association year, ACCSS has a total of 120 individual members. Individual members are divided into two categories.

1. **Category 1** - The first category is for senior researchers (permanent employees) working at a Dutch academic institution, or emeritus professors with an active promotor status .
2. **Category 2** – The second category is for junior researchers such as PhD students and postdoctoral fellows (including temporary employees) working at Dutch academic institutions.

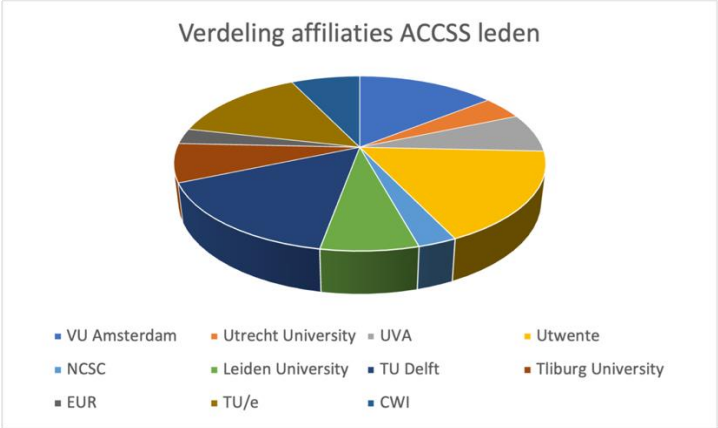
UD	36
UHD	14

Professors	26
PhD students and Postdocs	34
Senior Researchers	7
Emeritus Professors	2
Teachers	1
Total	120

3.3 Institutional members

Institutional membership is intended for academic knowledge institution; the employers of individual members. The dues paid by these institutions contribute significantly to ACCSS's activities. Our institutional members are (in alphabetical order):

- Centrum Wiskunde & Informatica (CWI - Center for Mathematics & Computer Science)
- Free University (VU), Amsterdam
- Leiden University
- Open University
- Radboud University
- Technical University Delft
- Technical University Eindhoven
- TILT, Tilburg University
- Twente University
- University of Amsterdam (UVA)



Overview ACCSS affiliates

The General Assembly meets at least twice a year. Due to COVID, an online kick-off meeting took place on June 25, 2021, the day after the official founding of ACCSS. In 2022, the assembly took place on May 19 in Enschede during the INTERSCT Conference and on December 15 in Utrecht during the last *dcypher* Thursday of the year.

The first General Assembly had the following items on its agenda:

- Explanation of activities
- Approval of the financial statements to be issued by the board, the policy plan, the annual plan and budget for the coming year
- Discharge of the board
- Proposal to use work groups
- Drafting of the By-Laws

The second General Assembly's agenda included:

- Explanation of activities
- The interim reports of the president and the various work groups
- The general annual budget and the annual budget of the various work groups within the association
- Adoption of the ACCSS Annual and Activities Plans for the following year
- Adoption of the by-laws

3.4 Governance

The association has had a three-member board since its establishment on June 24, 2021. Bibi van den Berg, Aiko Pras and Joeri Toet were the first board members and Jan Piet Barthel was the first director of ACCSS. The first board change took place in December 2022 when Aiko Pras reached retirement age and was succeeded by Zeki Erkin. Jan Piet Barthel also retired and was succeeded as director by Eveline Vreede on January 1, 2023.

3.5 Advisory Council

The association's board is assisted by a seven-member advisory council. These seven members represent the various disciplines and key themes central to cybersecurity science and contribute broad substantive input on these themes.

The advisory council works with the board to draft and develop new plans and give direction to the association. To this end, it met several times during the first year of the association.

Members of the advisory council (in alphabetical order by first name) are:

- Prof. Dr. Bart Jacobs
- Prof. Dr. Cristian Hesselman
- Trial Dr. Ir. Herbert Bos
- Prof. mr. Lokke Moerel
- Dr. Marten van Dijk
- Prof. Michel van Eeten
- Prof. Sandro Etalle

3.6 Finance Committee

Prof. Frederik Zuiderveen Borgesius and Dr. Anne de Hingh form the Finance Committee. In this capacity they audited the accounts and financial reports for this reporting period (see also the section on finances).

3.7 Het Branch Bureau (HBB)

ACCSS is supported by *Het Branch Bureau (HBB)*, or The Branch Office. We use *Het Branche Bureau's* address in Naarden (Gooimeer 4-15, 1411 DC Naarden) as our mailing address.

3.8 Work Groups

ACCSS's goals are achieved through the efforts of its members. ACCSS organizes its activities into work groups whenever possible.

The association had two active work groups at the end of the first year:

1. SIG-CS represents all Dutch academic institutions that conduct cybersecurity research from a computer science perspective.
2. HW&CPS Security brings together and positions the community on the topic of Hardware and Cyber-Physical System Security.

4. Core activities

To strengthen the position of the academic cybersecurity research community and its connection with the broader cybersecurity field, government and society, the following three core activities were formulated at the association's founding.

4.1 Networking Hub

ACCSS forms a networking hub with and for cybersecurity scientists from all scientific disciplines and universities in the Netherlands. This is achieved in part by the aforementioned work groups, which make an important substantive contribution to this objective. In addition, the following networking events were organized during the first year.

- ACCSS contributed to the INTERSCT/FUSION event held on May 19, 2022. In collaboration with KPN and Compumatica, the Cyber Security Best Research Paper Award (DCSRP), among others, was presented.
- At the ONE Conference 2022, which took place on October 18 and 19, ACCSS brought its community together and ACCSS sweatshirts were distributed to members in attendance as a way to increase visibility. A number of members proudly wore their sweatshirts during the main program.



- In December 2022, ACCSS and dcypher concluded the year with a General Assembly Meeting and networking drinks.

4.2. Gateway

ACCSS serves as a gateway, assisting public and private parties in finding and connecting with cybersecurity scholars in the Netherlands. Several requests for expertise were received this year, which were then submitted directly to specific members or put out to the broader network. ACCSS also provided names for requests for seats on (review) committees and relevant brainstorms. In doing so, ACCSS aims to encourage a broader representation beyond the "usual suspects" who are often already well known and liked, thereby contributing to diversity and giving opportunities to new generations of cybersecurity researchers.

4.3. Representation

Externally, through stakeholders and the broader network in the cybersecurity field, ACCSS has become a trusted point of contact and is widely viewed to represent the scientific community in the cybersecurity field. ACCSS acts as an advocate and representative for cybersecurity science that helps articulate positions and facilitate contributions that require cybersecurity expertise in Dutch public policy.

In 2022, ACCSS contributed to the BGP cybersecurity steering committee, which led to the CS4NL program. From now on, this program will arrange funding for new cybersecurity research projects. This will open several calls for proposals relevant to the ACCSS community during 2023.

ACCSS has taken a seat on the board of dcypher, the collaborative platform for public-private partnerships in cybersecurity, to represent science. Together with dcypher, SURF, TNO and CVN, a lot of energy was put into a potential *Nationale Groiefonds* (NGF) or National Growth Fund, proposal in 2022. Discussions on this will continue in 2023 in the hopes of submitting a cybersecurity NGF proposal.

ACCSS has also contributed to the new *Nederlandse Cybersecurity Strategie* (**NLCS**: Dutch Cybersecurity Strategy), the new *Cybersecurity Beeld Nederland* (**CSBN**: Dutch Cybersecurity Image) and the *Nederlandse Veiligheidsstrategie* (Dutch Security Strategy), on behalf of science.

ACCSS has published 4 open letters and a position paper on current cybersecurity challenges.

5. Finances

ACCSS's income comes from membership dues from individuals and institutions. In addition, ACCSS received €100k from SIDN in December 2021. The income is used to carry out the core activities described above, with the objective of strengthening the position of the academic cybersecurity research community and their connection with the broader cybersecurity field, government and society. In 2021 and 2022, expenses were incurred for bringing the community together, setting up the association and day-to-day management. Total income was € 154,315 and total expenses were € 66,854. This means that there was a positive balance of € 87,461 for the fiscal year 2022, which will be added to the reserves. The financial audit took place and discharge was granted at the General Assembly of June 22, 2023.

Further details are available in the association's annual financial report included in the attachments.

6. Outlook

ACCSS entered 2023 with a changed board and a new set-up of operations. As such, work will continue on the further professionalization of the organization. A major focus in 2023 will be ensuring the continuity of the association, both administratively and commercially. We hope to achieve this by strengthening the organizational structure, through work groups and task-oriented support from the network, among other things.

In line with its objectives, ACCSS will focus primarily on the following activities. These are explained in detail in the attached 2023 Annual Plan.

6.1 Networking Hub

- Further encourage, develop, position and support existing and new ACCSS member work groups (including workshops and/or meetings)
- Formalize collaboration and joint event with Cyber Security "Next Generation" (CSng) scientists ([CSng](#))
- Organize events for or with our members (including showcases), both independently and in collaboration with partner organizations
- Continued work with NWO and dcypher to create the necessary meetings and networking for optimizing enrollment in the calls for proposals
- Contribute to dcypher events or parts of the central government
- Organize the (annual) Dutch cybersecurity best research paper (DCSRP) award competition and ceremony with the SIG-CS.

6.2 Gateway

- Promote better visibility through strong profiling of ACCSS;

- Maintain contacts with the other links in the security and knowledge chain, such as governments, private partners and the media
- Forward questions and requests about scientific cybersecurity expertise to appropriate members

6.3 Representation

- Organize input from the academic community and function as a voice on behalf of that community
- Encourage involvement of ACCSS members in policy development, strategy and policy implementation initiatives and, where useful, involvement in oversight from the central and/or local government;
- Represent ACCSS interests within the central government.

In support of this, ACCSS maintains its perspective on cybersecurity themes and the academic landscape, and its relationships with partner organizations.

Attachments

1. Annual financial report

2. Audit committee report

3. Annual plan 2023