



Cool Tools Show Podcast Episode 293: Stephanie Jaros

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Mark: Welcome to the Cool Tools show, I'm Mark Frauenfelder, editor-in-chief of Cool Tools, a website of tool recommendations written by our readers. You can find this @cool-tools.org. I'm joined by my co-host Kevin Kelly, founder of cool tools. Hey Kevin.

Kevin: Hey, it's great to be here.

Mark: In each episode of the Cool Tools show Kevin and I talk to a guest about some of his or her favorite uncommon and uncommonly good tools they think others should know about. Our guest this week is Stephanie Jaros. Stephanie is the director of research for the Department of Defense Counter Insider Threat Program. In 2018, she created the Threat Lab, which is a program dedicated to integrating the social and behavioral sciences into Insider Threat Programs. It's fascinating stuff, and we have worked together at Institute for the Future, and I just was really excited to have you on Cool tools. Here you are, how's it going, Stephanie?

Stephanie: It's going well, thank you so much for reaching out and for inviting me. I'm convinced that these are my 15 minutes of fame.

Kevin: Not necessarily. We're just so delighted that you can join us. We're excited to hear what you want to share with us.

Mark: The first one we're going to talk about is a pair of pajamas, which is fortunate because my wife was just talking about wanting to get some for some upcoming travel.

Stephanie: Yes, my first item is in fact a pair of pajamas, but before I get into that, let me just say a couple of things. One, my boss and my lawyer have said that I need to make it very clear that I am not speaking for the Department of Defense, lest anyone out there think that the Department of Defense is endorsing a pair of pajamas. They are not. I just needed to make sure that that was very clear.

Mark: Duly noted.

Stephanie: The likelihood of this ending up on the front page of the Washington Post, I would think is quite low, but perhaps my boss and my lawyer may know something I don't. The second thing is when you invited me to do this, I, of course knew you Mark, but I don't know you Kevin, we've never met and I wasn't familiar with your podcast. I committed myself to picking and locking in my choices before I listened to previous episodes. That was both a good idea and perhaps a bad idea.

Stephanie: A Good idea because these four items they are themed and it really got me thinking about, well, what do I do? What do I not do? So many things were on the list of things I don't do. I don't garden, I don't cook. I don't exercise, I don't have kids. I don't have a mortgage. I realized, wait a second, this is now spiraling a bit out of control. That can't possibly be the message that Mark is trying to tell me about my life. I thought, well, there are things that I do, but they really do seem to fit into this how to be a middle-aged shut in. That was the theme, an emotionally stable, healthy middle-aged shut-in is what I really thought about.

Kevin: That's most of our audience. You're going to talk to them.

Stephanie: That may be your audience, but that is a wonderful transition into why it was bad that I did not listen to the other episodes because I listened to Douglas Copeland invite you to dinner, and I thought, what am I doing? What am I doing on this podcast? Douglas Copeland and Andrew Mayne and Nick Bilton, I have all of their books and I've met Vanessa Mason and her impressive research. All of these people had such wonderful tools. I thought, my goodness, I have pajamas. Maybe this will connect with a new audience or a slightly different audience or audience members who had to look up the word oscilloscope like I did.

Kevin: We love it that there's such a huge variety. That's why we keep doing this. I don't think we've had anybody suggest pajamas before, but that is exactly why you're here. Tell us about why these pajamas, how they're better than other pajamas and why you love them.

Stephanie: I am a bit of a subject matter expert in sleeping. In fact-

Kevin: Are you a good sleeper?

Stephanie: I am an excellent sleeper. I don't know if I was a good sleeper when I was a baby. I should ask my mom. I'm seeing her in a couple of weeks. Fingers crossed with COVID restrictions, but what my Olympic sport would be is napping. I can fall asleep anywhere. I can fall asleep sitting up. I can fall asleep on a plane. I know some people can't do that. When I used to commute and live on the East Coast, I would travel from Baltimore to Washington DC every day, taking the 6:13 AM express. I would be out by 6:15, and then probably wake up when we pulled into the station. I know a lot of people cannot do that.

Mark: Good for you.

Kevin: That's a superpower. This your uniform, is this you saying you got a superpower?

Stephanie: Yes, should I get badges, merit badges?

Kevin: Yes, I think so. I think you should have some designer colors too.

Stephanie: I've been in relationships in the past where I've been napping and someone's come into the room to make sure that I'm not dead. That's very kind of them. Let's get to these pajamas. I have explored a number of pajamas over the years, and I have often found one of two things or both. One is they do not hold up multiply or washed multiple times they just start to really thin out to the point where it's not that they're see-through, but they're really not of a high quality. They fall apart a little bit. Then the second thing is they shrink. I went with these particular pajamas from L.L.Bean specifically because they hold up really well. They're a bit pricey. They are a bit of a treat but they hold up very well.

Stephanie: Being in COVID, I don't know about either of you, but I have not been to an office space since March of 2020, and we have had no instruction that we are going back at least until March of 2022. That is not the same for the East Coast. The people have already been called back to the Pentagon at least on not quite a hundred percent, but there are people who go in and out every day. There are people who go to our headquarters office on the East Coast every day, or a couple of times a week, I think, but there have been a lot of changes to our office space on the West Coast. I don't think we're really going to be going back anytime soon. I can say with authority that these pajamas are getting washed once a week for the last now more than 52 weeks.

Kevin: They are holding up?

Stephanie: They are. One of the things that I love to do is I do love to clean, but I didn't put any cleaning products on this. If I had a fancy washer and dryer, I would be less inclined to say so strongly that these pajamas hold up, but I have such a garbage washer and dryer that's in this apartment. It's older. It has to be older than definitely people's children who were born in the '90s. These things, I don't even know if you can still get these at Sears or wherever it is you buy these sorts of things. It's a crappy washer and dryer. These things are getting washed all the time and they hold up. Number two is though they do shrink, these particular. I know that because I've now bought two different sizes to test them out. These are really user tested pajamas, which the more I talk about this, the more embarrassed for myself I kind of get.

Kevin: You shouldn't be. As a matter of fact, I have the L .L. Bean plaid nightgowns.

Stephanie: Do you really?

Kevin: Yes, that's what I wear every night. I have the L. L. Bean's plaid flannel nightgowns and I can attest for everything you said.

Stephanie: See, we connect in such strange ways. I love it.

Kevin: I also have a superpower of sleep. I am a robot. I have a little switch I turn on and I'm out. Then at the right time, I automatically wake up and I'm on.

Stephanie: I don't have that one. That one I don't have, getting out of bed takes an act of Congress every day.

Kevin: No, I'm just like a light bulb, off and on. Maybe it's because of these pajamas.

Stephanie: It could be. They do shrink and they kind of shrunk in weird places. They shrunk in the arms and they shrunk across in the shoulders. Definitely go up a size. I found that that has worked really well. I don't know if that's the case with the nightgown as well, but I've got the two kind of shirt and pants version.

Kevin: That's wonderful. L.L.Bean plaid pajamas, I keep saying flaid, plaid flannel, but I think flaid is even better.

Stephanie: I love that.

Mark: There you go, shortened it.

Kevin: Stephanie, tell us about your second cool tool.

Stephanie: One of the things that I do spend a lot of time on is reading. I mentioned that I used to live on the East Coast and I lived in a pretty big house. When I downsized and moved to California, I got it in my head that I was going to become a Kindle person. I donated hundreds and hundreds of books that I had accumulated over the years and I got to California and I was just so sad. I was so very sad. I missed my beautiful books and what did I do? I bought them all back. If there are any rational choice scholars out there, any economists out there who want to talk about the irrationality of consumer behavior, that is fantastic.

Mark: They should interview you.

Stephanie: They should, but I've always considered books to be artwork, when they're all on the shelf and you can see all their covers or their spines. They're just beautiful.

Mark: You should see Kevin's library.

Kevin: Yes, I'm in the middle right now sitting in a two-story library right now, surrounded by way too many books.

Stephanie: What a wonderful gift to yourself.

Kevin: It is and I tell you, nothing makes me as happy as having all my books in sight. It's a real luxury I would have to say, but that's where I spend my days. I understand it. You have a particular book that you want to suggest?

Stephanie: Yes. It's John Carreyrou's book Bad Blood. When I did look at your website, I found it on there. I don't know if Cool Tools has already talked about this book, but what I-

Kevin: I think Mark's a fan of the book, right?

Mark: Yes, I read it and really liked it a lot, but tell us about, I want to hear.

Stephanie: What I love about this book and so many others like it, I could have picked so many of them that are about this phenomenon of the entrepreneur celebrating the inventor, the people who make new things, break down barriers, challenge conventional thinking, and everyone loves them until they don't. Then they just flame out. It's fascinating to me. On my nightstand right now is the new investigative journalism book on WeWork, and I've always thought of Adam Newman as that East Coast version of Elizabeth Holmes and this book, and this is one of the questions that I was so excited to ask you both about because something about the culture of Silicon Valley made this experience and made Elizabeth Holme's possible.

Stephanie: For those of you who aren't familiar, if there's a podcast, and I think there might even be an HBO documentary out there this book, it is about a Stanford student who later dropped out who wanted to invent a machine that with just what 1, 2, 3, 4 drops of blood, not vials, but drops of blood could diagnose a variety of conditions in humans. She was able to successfully secure millions upon millions of dollars of capital, of very impressive board of directors, including I believe, General Mattis, Secretary Shultz. Of course, the machine never worked. If I recall correctly, she also partnered with a pharmacy chain. I can't remember which one, it was, Walgreens-

Mark: CVS.

Kevin: CVS.

Stephanie: CVS, and got these machines into some of these stores that consumers around the country or in parts of the country used. In some cases they were diagnosed with diseases they didn't have, or they were shown to not have diseases or conditions that they did have. What is most fascinating to me is as somebody who has sociology degrees in the sociology of sex and gender, it's a woman who pulled it off. I always get a little excited and feel that feminism has moved forward when women get busted for doing really bad things. It's progress. It really is when we are entering white collar crime it's fascinating to me.

Stephanie: That's a little bit about why this story just captured my attention because unlike stealing money or something like stealing something else, this was people's health. These were life and death decisions that people could have made when they got the results of these tests. There were so many red flags along the way. There were employees who knew

things weren't right. Obviously I didn't work there. I just know what's in the book and in the media coverage, but there are enough people who said that it was a terrible environment. It was toxic. It was mean, it was people came and went all the time. I just not having been born and raised or had a career in the Silicon Valley, how do youth too think that something like this could happen?

Kevin: It's funny because it's kind of like a glass half empty half full. For me what's interesting is that it doesn't happen more often. The fact that this one is kind of a rare thing, it's actually amazing that it doesn't happen more often. There aren't really that many that do happen that way. Maybe in another era it could have gone on even longer. Maybe the thing about it is that it was discovered so soon. You can say pretty far, but again, because we have this very strong investigative tradition, The Wall Street Journal, they were able to break it open. If you have that kind of a force of investigative journalism, and it's only finding one of these every so often, that's amazing. That means that basically it's a pretty good system.

Mark: That's interesting.

Stephanie: That is really interesting because those are some of the questions that we ask for those of us who study in my case, espionage or workplace violence, or IT sabotage, the fact that they are these high-impact events, but why don't they happen more often? Why don't people steal things more often or sell them if you did, I won't say if you do it right, but if you do it once and you do it for enough money and you really plan it out, maybe you could get away with it, but maybe not. That's a fascinating point. I love that.

Kevin: That's because I'm an off the chart optimist, so I tend to see these things. For me, what progress is a lot about is about the things that don't happen. A lot of what progress is about is the things that would normally have happened in the past that don't happen as often now, like the two-year-old child who does not die of smallpox or whatever, the family who was not robbed of all their surplus. For me, the real thing is not the fact that these happen every now and then it's that they don't happen more often. That's something that we can celebrate in a certain sense, the fact that there's a best-selling book because it's so rare.

Stephanie: What a great way to think about it.

Mark: One of the things that's stood out to me is how, if mainly Elizabeth Holmes is taking the fall for something that I think the real power players, David Boaz, that lawyer Schultz, all these very powerful men-

Kevin: Who were not in Silicon Valley, by the way, who are East Coast people.

Mark: As soon as things started getting bad, I really feel like they knew everything that was going on. They were in the meetings, they could've pulled the plug. They could have done that but they just kept this lie perpetuating because they were hoping to profit from it. Then as soon as things got bad, all the blame fell on her. She's not the only one who is part of this issue. For her to be the scapegoat, no, not the scapegoat because I do

think that she did terrible stuff, but there were other players who were getting away with it.

Stephanie: Now, Kevin, you made the comment that these are East Coast people who were on her board. I want to know more about what you mean by that because you're right and I hadn't thought about that either.

Kevin: You'd ask the question that this was kind of like what about Silicon Valley stuff? I'm saying yes, the organization, the company was in Silicon Valley, but a lot of the high powered people were not in Silicon Valley. I think that was part of the problem is that they were a little bit more easily bamboozled by this whereas in my recollection, a lot of people in Silicon Valley wanted nothing to do with it because they were saying that this is not working. There was this kind of underground invisible thing of like, no, I don't believe this. They were hands off and it was sort of like the East Coast people who were kind of buying into this idea, I can now be part of Silicon Valley and they were drinking the Kool-Aid.

Mark: That's really interesting.

Stephanie: That is. All those lessons learned that the Silicon Valley-

Kevin: There was a couple of other ones that did come like the Juicero.

Mark: Yes, Juicero.

Kevin: Yes, there was a couple of other things when they were overbuilding something that was just way beyond and they just didn't have any clue about what actually people were doing. They got a high evaluation, there was less of fraud it was more of incompetence there, but I'm sure we'll have another one, another fraud case come up. That is kind of inevitable, but I think in general, at least in Silicon Valley whereas people do bite into the hype, there's also a pretty good hype detector sense and plenty of people who have BS filters in to kind of raise the alarm. I think in general that Silicon Valley is still in a pretty healthy state and that this bad blood with [inaudible 00:23:01] is not really a significant sign other than the fact, hey, this system does work.

Stephanie: Well, there certainly are just off the top of my head, far more regular contributions to my library that come out of the banking sector. Now I'm really thinking about this and Adam Newman and his wife is also to me one of the most fascinating people in the brain gymnastics that it would take to go from, we have successfully created a leasing company or a real estate rental company so now we can create a school, is fascinating to me how you go from one area of expertise to a generalist and how we celebrate people until we don't, and then how we recover on the stories that we tell. I'm so glad that you shared your thoughts with me because that really is a great way to think about this.

Kevin: Let's shift to something less profound, but maybe more interesting-

Stephanie: Equally important.

Kevin: Equally important in the grand scheme of things, if not more. Let's talk about cat charmers.

Stephanie: I don't even think I needed to say that I have cats. I think that any person listening to this already knew that.

Mark: Who wouldn't guess?

Stephanie: I know, and I am actually allergic to cats. My sinus surgeon was, I think personally disappointed in me when she said, "You know that's not helping your sinuses." She almost dared imply that I get rid of my cats, but then I gave her a look and she just kind of shook her head and said, "Hey if you want to put my kids through college, by all means, I'll take your money." For years and years, I grew up with dogs, big dogs St. Bernards and then I was never a cat person. I never understood what the point of them was. My aunt had a wonderful cat though, and I kind of thought of him as an exception. My brother's cat, you never saw, it only came out at night and would wander around the house and just was this Krabby Patty of an animal.

Stephanie: Then I lived in Baltimore and for whatever reason, I got it in my head that I needed a cat because my partner at the time we lived in a very old Victorian home. We had mice and he was about to go on a work trip for nearly two months. I thought, well, I bet if I get a cat, I really won't have to do much with it and it'll take care of my mice problem. We went to the local shelter and there was just the most affectionate, beautiful cat. She was a little pudgy. We thought, okay, we'll take her to the vet. We'll put her on a light diet, but she was otherwise healthy. We were really happy and she had been spayed. We were all set. 30 days after we got her, she was in bed with me in the middle of the night, my partner was gone and I heard a noise I had never heard before. She had just given birth.

Mark: Oh my God. That was why she was pudgy.

Stephanie: We had put her on a low calorie diet and she had no prenatal care. I called the all night that, and I don't know if they record their messages for training purposes, but the words that came out of my mouth, it was 3:00 or 3:30 in the morning. The woman's sweetest can be thick Baltimore accent, she's like, "Are you sure it's a kitten? Maybe she brought you a mouse." I'm like, "Okay, well, let me look." Dumb enough, of course, what else would it be? It's a kitten. She said, "Well, she's going to have more." I was dumb enough to ask. I was like, "How many more?" She's like, "Hun, I don't know."

Stephanie: I found a box. We hadn't lived in the house very long. I put Ilsa, was the name of the cat named after one of my professors, I put her in a box and her first baby into a box and we sat on the floor and three more kittens came, she was a Calico and all different colors came out. Then I went and I took a shower and I came back and her last one was there. She ended up with five and ever since I have been a cat person.

Kevin: Did you keep all five?

Stephanie: I was a bit ridiculous about screening who was eligible to adopt one of these cats. This is this such a good reason why I don't have human children because I know I would be a ridiculous parent. We kept one and then the other four went to pre-screened colleagues of mine. One person had actually recommended a friend of hers who was looking for a kitten. I spoke with this person on the phone and I just didn't get the feeling that she was going to be a good fit. I had to decline her.

Kevin: Is this the kind of a case where if people had been screening you, they would not have let you have a cat to begin with?

Stephanie: Oh my God, they wouldn't even let me have a driver's license. No, of course not. I'm also One of those people that I will make something that you're supposed to build, like an IKEA desk or something like that. There are only two or three tools that are required. The Allen wrench, maybe a screwdriver. By the end of the day, I will have a mallet out, I will have super glue out. I might have the drill out. It really is. The screening, I guess goes both ways, but I have been a cat person ever since. The cat Peanut butter is one of my cats right now and the only toy that she has liked consistently even on a daily basis, is this rainbow cat charmer. What's particularly funny is I didn't even buy it for her. When I first started dating my boyfriend, he was so smart. He sent me a gift or brought me a gift and he brought a gift for the cat.

Kevin: He knows the way to your heart.

Stephanie: There is a little piece of dating advice to your audience. I can't even remember what he brought me. I have no idea, maybe a book. I have no idea.

Kevin: It was flowers. Describe the cat charmer for those like me who have no idea what this could possibly be.

Stephanie: It's about a foot-long plastic stick. At the end of it is a ribbon. Kind of think of rhythmic gymnastics that you'll see at the Olympics. Instead of the ribbon on the end, it is a rainbow-covered fleece, not so much of a string, but more of a sock, kind of a narrow sock. I've had a couple of these little stick toys and I've had some break when you're playing and the cat pulls too hard and the thing pops off, the string just detaches from the plastic handle. I've had one that was elastic. That was really fun.

Stephanie: The cat could pull on it but then it inevitably snapped and somebody got an elastic band to the face. That was never good. This one is not stretchy. You won't get that service out of it, but for whatever reason, every single night, this cat wand, I guess, it lives in the kitchen. I put it on the counter every night when I get into bed and I turn off the light, Peanut butter goes into the kitchen, pulls it off the counter and drags it into the bedroom and ask me to turn the light back on and play with her.

Mark: Smart cat.

Stephanie: Every night.

Kevin: Does it appeal just to that one cat or is this general universal cat appeal?

Stephanie: I do have a second cat. Her name is Chief Justice and she lives under the bed. She really likes it, but I feel like there's some sort of a relationship negotiation that has gone on between Peanut butter and CJ that Peanut butter would prefer not to have her toys played with by CJ. CJ will watch it with really big eyes and occasionally I'll dangle it in front of her and she'll jump at it. She kind of understands what she's supposed to do with it. She's a very pretty cat, but I don't know that she's so bright. After a while she just gets confused and runs back under the bed and then Peanut butter can re-establish her dominance.

Kevin: We're not a pet family, but what I do have in the drawer for visiting pets, a red laser.

Stephanie: That's smart.

Kevin: I'm wondering how does the cat charmer compare to a red laser in terms of entertainment value?

Stephanie: You will not be surprised to know that I have also evaluated a variety of lasers. The one that I settled on is a hands-free device. You can just turn it on and for 15 minutes it has a red laser that goes on the floor. For whatever reason, Peanut butter, she cares about that for maybe 30 seconds then she's done, but this goofy \$7, \$8, something like that, this goofy fleece rainbow wand every night, she loves, she jumps. She grabs it. She eats it. I don't know why. I don't know if it has a certain smell. It doesn't even have catnip inside of it. Some toys will have catnip inside this one doesn't so I don't know what goes on in that little brain of hers but she loves it.

Mark: That's a good one. We had three cats and one passed away, but we still have two and they're both very playful. This sounds like a good thing to try.

Kevin: As you said, it's about \$7 and it lasts forever and you'll never regret a purchase of it if you have a cat. What's a fourth tool for you.

Stephanie: This one again, is there was no other guests that you had who mentioned something as idiotic as this.

Kevin: Actually there was, Jane Metcalf talked a lot about a skincare moisturizer, vitamin. I don't know what it was, but it was something that she was very enthusiastic about. This is an official category for Cool Tools.

Stephanie: Thank you for lifting me up. This is my moisturizer with SPF 50. I remember reading an article once that said anything above maybe a 30 is just marketing. It's a lie.

Mark: I've heard that too.

Stephanie: I own SPF 100 and I know it's meaningless. Anyway, this is my Dermalogica skin recovery SPF 50 anti-aging moisturizer. It seems like the more words that are in a product, the more likely I am to buy it.

Mark: The more expensive it is.

Stephanie: This is not cheap. This is not cheap at all. This is another treat and what's even goofier about something like this obviously to be a shut-in, you need to be wearing sunscreen if and when you do go out, hopefully not in your pajamas, but nothing wrong if you do. In fact, go out in your pajamas or with your cat. The SPF 50 works really well. I can attest to that. What I can't attest to is I've been using this since I was in my late 20s. It says it's anti-aging, I don't know what that means.

Kevin: You're still 20 though, right?

Stephanie: Exactly. We use all these products and I remember when I first bought an eye cream, because of course somebody told me that I needed to and I thought, well, I'm just going to use it on one eye and for 20 years and see what happens. We'll see if the other eye actually looks different, but I wasn't bold enough to do that.

Mark: That would have been such an interesting experience.

Stephanie: I know.

Kevin: Today if you had a YouTube channel you would do that, for sure.

Stephanie: I know, I really want to hope that there would be a visible difference. That my one eye would, I don't know, maybe it would've fallen out or my lashes would have gone prematurely gray. I have no idea.

Kevin: There was actually a truck driver who did this experiment in [inadible 00:37:27].

Stephanie: Really?

Kevin: Yes. The side of his face on the window was completely weathered.

Stephanie: That would make sense.

Kevin: The other side of the face inside the cab was not, and it was sort of horrifying sometimes because the difference was very noticeable. He definitely should have used cream on that side of his face.

Stephanie: I have my uniform of flannel pajamas or what did we call them? Flajids. I have my flajids and I have my reading material, my hashtag feminist reading material. I keep my cat entertained and my skin looking not so much like an indoor vampire but very moisturized and protected against the sun and costing me a small fortune, but I'm convinced. I'm really convinced.

Kevin: The only thing it needs now is we need actually a term for this demographic, this cohort, this thing, this subculture that you're talking about.

Stephanie: Cat lady doesn't do it.

Kevin: I don't think shut-in or any of these words. I think we need something like Otaku in Japanese or something.

Stephanie: I was thinking about all the other products I could have listed. I thought, I have great flannel sheets. I have great blackout curtains. I have this wonderful other book or I'm listening to podcasts all the time. I do think there is a market for all of these pieces and I imagine that COVID has made them even more popular. When I was listening to Vanessa Mason's podcast and she talked about bullet journaling and people who have explored new hobbies in COVID, and I think she talked about people who are working hard to self-improve. I thought, that's not me. I know that there's people out there, but I didn't buy a Peloton. I didn't do that. Did either of you learn a new hobby or do new things during COVID?

Kevin: I try to learn something new every year. I've learned Procreate, this app for the iPad to draw. I'm trying to draw, learning to paint or draw. The thing that it allows me to do is to pick colors because I was really bad in kind of mixing colors, but I can pick colors really nicely. That's what I've been doing. I don't know about mark. Mark, what have you been...

Mark: I have picked up doing art more.

Kevin: Your doodles?

Mark: Doodling quite a bit more. I've also been experimenting with the Arduino more and trying to make music synthesizers with the Arduino, which is kind of pushing it to its limits, but that's been kind of a fun hobby on the side for me.

Stephanie: See, then I just list all of the things that I didn't try.

Kevin: Somebody has to do that.

Stephanie: I guess you both need audiences, right?

Kevin: Yes, we do.

Stephanie: I can listen to your tones and I can look at your-

Kevin: You can see my little scribbles.

Stephanie: Yes.

Kevin: We form an ecosystem in that way.

Stephanie: I love it. I will think of myself more as the audience for all of the new gifts that people want to share with the world.

Kevin: I think there are ways to be a better audience than others. Some people are better audiences than others. That's what you can become good at.

Mark: Stephanie, could you talk about your upcoming Counter Insider Threat, social and behavioral science summit, which is open to the public, I believe.

Stephanie: It is.

Mark: Which is so cool. You do such interesting work and you're too humble.

Kevin: Where do we go to join that as an audience?

Stephanie: Now that I would like the entire audience to forget all of the silliness and take me seriously as a security professional. One of the big things that the Threat Lab works on, as I said, is integrating this concept of social behavioral science into Insider Threats research, because it is a human problem.

Kevin: Could you just explain Insider Threat because that's a term that I don't think is so self-evident.

Stephanie: In the government, most people think of it as people who steal classified material, whether they hoard it or whether they misuse their access to go on and give it away to our adversaries, so spies, but it has grown this concept of insider threat and the misuse of privilege and access of course as a cybersecurity term but it also has been expanded to those who perpetrate violence against an organization or the people in it. There are multiple types of workplace violence but the one we're most interested in is employee on employee violence and trying to prevent those events. We cannot-

Kevin: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I just want to be sure. You're saying insider threat would include employee on employee violence. That's one example of insider threat?

Stephanie: It is, someone who-

Kevin: Insider threat would be broader than just that. It would also mean an employee who's spying for their own gain inside a company, or what would be the general range of insider threat? Just in one minute, how would you say that?

Stephanie: We could think of people who steal intellectual property to start their own business. That would be a good example. People who depart an organization and then use the information that's in their head, sometimes classified sometimes not, and they use it to sell, "Hey, here's how you build a missile. Here's how you build an airplane. Here's how you build a microchip or here's how you do that particular chemistry in order to produce this product that you can then go on and sell."

Kevin: Then insider threat is a general term for things like that, that occur both within a company as well within a government or is it just mostly about kind of a national government thing?

Stephanie: The phrase insider threat, I think originated in an executive order. In the government that the Obama administration issued and it was actually after the Chelsea Manning leak to WikiLeaks. It was very focused on information. It was very focused on people who have a national security clearance. You think about people with top secret or secret clearances, but we've really expanded it to include who may misuse their authorized access.

Kevin: Even if it's in a corporation, not just in government?

Stephanie: Right, and the priorities, I think may be different in a corporation, especially when it comes to spear fishing. We hear a lot of concerns about unintentional insider threats. We also have that middle category of people who violate security protocols. They do it intentionally, but they do it because the security protocols get in the way of doing business.

Kevin: I get that. I could fall into that one.

Stephanie: We all do. Imagine if we've ever had somebody who says, I want X, Y, and Z, and I want it done now while the proper way takes 10 minutes but the short way-

Kevin: Or your password has to be 25 characters up and down and you know that can get away with eight or whatever.

Stephanie: Exactly. It just makes life easier. That's why we're trying to talk to usability experts and talk to psychologists and talk to all sorts of people who actually make these tools and services more likely for people to comply with. Those are the types of crimes that we're trying to prevent or any type of concerning behavior that may lead to that. We have realized over the last couple of years, that again, we're not going to prevent these types of cases if we simply wait around to detect them. If we know that human behavior takes place in an individual and organizational context, we've all got our reasons for why we do what we do, even if we don't necessarily articulate them, but they happen inside of a corporate or an office structure.

Stephanie: There's an environment of all the things that you could choose to do you chose to attack your supervisor. Why did you do that? We're making the argument that the environment of leadership, of human resources, of performance, of the interactions that you have every day with people, they actually affect the overall culture and environment that may affect or facilitate your decision to go on to do these insider threat activities and anybody who's ever studied human behavior, they think, well, of course, that's fine. That makes sense but if you haven't, that seems way out there for somebody who maybe has built their career on doing background investigations or polygraph examinations.

Kevin: You're having this I guess you can let me call it a conference or summit and you say it's open to the public. What kind of people would you imagine would benefit the most by attending or joining?

Stephanie: The conference is hosted @sbssummit.com, and right now it includes registration, and you can see all the materials from our 2020 summit, but this year registration will be opening in the next couple of weeks. The theme is cultural intelligence. Again, not necessarily a theme that security professionals may think about as related to their work, but if we think about, on a micro level, what are all the cognitive biases that are derived from who we are, where we've been, how we live, that could affect our ability to do our work as investigators and analysts. How do you interpret what you see on somebody's social media page has a lot to do with where you come from, or do you know the person, do you not know the person? Is objectivity truly something that can be reached in any of these things as we work to protect the workforce?

Stephanie: From the micro level to the more macro level of getting rid of toxic leaders or not rewarding people just because they make a lot of money for the organization, not promoting them if they don't have the skills, the people skills. During the month of September, starting on September 1st, we'll open our summit. Every week we will launch webcasts, pre-recorded talks with researchers who are presenting their own research around this topic of cultural intelligence and improving security.

Stephanie: We start at the micro level, we go through the organizational level and we have unlike last year, we're going to be having live keynote speakers every week, which is really exciting. We are going to be featuring as well, a student poster session so that the future workforce can tell us about the research that they're doing. When you come back on every Monday, there will be new content there for you to look at. All of our speakers also provide recommended resources, whether it's their own, or maybe they want to recommend a book or a cat charmer or a moisturizer, although I haven't seen any of them do that.

Kevin: It's kind of virtual conference there, you'll have the opportunity to watch and listen to the presentations. Is there a chance for people to ask questions or interact with the presenters, or is it just basically an audience mode?

Stephanie: It will be on audience mode except for the live keynotes. The presentations, the prerecorded webinars, we usually ask people for about 15, 20 minutes and then the keynotes will be once a week and they will be an hour long.

Kevin: There will be interaction with the audience with those?

Stephanie: Yes.

Kevin: Is there a fee? Is there a website that you can go to? What's the general procedure for people who are interested?

Stephanie: You can check out sbssummit.com. It is free. It is open to everyone. In fact, my sponsors who supported this particular conference and who have provided the resources, we had 1300 people register last year from around the world. They would love even more and they would love as many countries as possible represented.

Kevin: Who are the sponsors?

Stephanie: In this case, it's the National Insider Threat taskforce.

Kevin: Is that like a US federal thing or?

Stephanie: It is. It's a US government national task force that has the responsibility of overseeing all these Insider Threat programs that we have to create.

Kevin: Is this open to anybody of any nationality?

Stephanie: It is. What we also wanted to do was once it closes at the end of September, we keep the content up. If for example, you're a professor and you wanted to talk about cognitive biases, you could log in and you could show your students that video from the former branch chief of security for the FBI or the FBI's chief psychologist. It's open. People can use it and you just have to register. We do ask for a name and an email address, but we don't require any additional information, and it's all been put through security. There's nothing classified and we hope that people will use the library of resources after it closes every September.

Kevin: That's fantastic.

Mark: It sounds amazing.

Kevin: We'll have links to that. You can try to give us-

Stephanie: You can see the 2020 site that's that's on right now.

Kevin: We'll try and get this up as soon as we can so there's just enough time to register. Stephanie, this has been fantastic. I love what you're doing professionally. That's really great work. I have so many questions, but this would have to be another podcast sometime, but thank you for serving our shut-in cohort with these. These are great. These are really very useful for anybody and we appreciate your sharing it with us.

Stephanie: I have so much enjoyed the conversation and Mark, we had a chance to meet on a project talking about the threat horizons and things we should be paying attention to when it comes to protecting our workforce. We are always looking for new people to talk with who have about what's coming next and recommendations for how we can get ahead of it. I would love to keep talking.

Mark: Absolutely Stephanie, thank you so much. This was so great talking to you and learning about not only the work you're doing but your tools and stuff too, which are just great.

Stephanie: Thank you so much.

Mark: Hey everybody. It's your co-host Mark. I wanted to let you know that we have a lot more going on here in Cool Tools than just this podcast. We have our flagship website where we review a new tool every day. That's at cool-tools.org. We also have four different newsletters. We have this podcast, we have a YouTube channel where we review tools.

Mark: If you like what you hear and see and read the best way to help us out is by going to our Patreon page at patreon.com/cooltools and donate at any level you wish. You can even contribute \$1 a month. That would mean a lot to us. The money that you give us will go towards paying for our transcribing costs, editing videos, and editing the podcast. It goes towards paying contributors who write the reviews for us. It goes towards our equipment costs, our hosting costs, and it supports our very small company of three people.

Mark: This week, I wanted to give a shout out to some of our Patreon supporters who have been giving us at least \$2 a month. If you give us \$2 a month, we'll give you a shout out online. This week I would like to thank Michael Sacochia, Molly Star, M Velderman, Apposable thumbs, Pamela Cooley, Patrick Weigher, Paul Hosey, Randy Fisher, Stuart Burrows Brand, Synaptic Sam, Theresa Swartz, Tom Hawkins, Tom Markham, Watt Bear, Havier Pangolin, David Lang, Eric Bayers, Sean Hartley, Steven Powell, Greg Lickstate, John Hopson, Adam Bristol, Adam Neyer, anonymous, Bill Kempthorne, Bruce I. Niles, Chris Woodruff, C. Colos, Derryl Plen, [inaudible 00:25:56] Eric Hanchrow, Eric Hoover, Godfrey Soldana, Jay Skiles, John M. Larson, Jude Gallagher, Kenneth Gilman and Lucas Frank, thank you very much for supporting the show and we will see you next week.