Navy funding software security research at UW-Madison

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UW-Madison has received $6.1 million from the Navy to support a research project into software security.

Professor Somesh Jha of the UW-Madison Computer Sciences Department will lead the research team. He's a specialist in information security and has published numerous works on detecting malware, network security protocols and much more.

The project will focus on containers, but not the physical kind. Just as standardized shipping containers simplified the process of transporting diverse goods, containers in the online world make it easier to move software from one computing environment to another.

Tech analytics firm 451 Research says container technologies generated $762 million in revenue in 2016. And these containers have been gaining more footing in the tech world in recent years, with industry leaders using containers for major aspects of their platforms. Google, for example, runs nearly everything in containers, including Gmail, Youtube and search.

One problem with containers, according to a UW-Madison release, is that they can build up redundancies, becoming "bloated."

"Bloat causes slowdowns, and software becomes harder to manage, and of course security is a big concern," Jha said. "If you are including things (in a container) that are not needed, if any one part of that is compromised, you're becoming vulnerable."

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