



Alumnus Dennis Groves
Subject ISG
Graduated 2010
Place of Work OWASP
Position Founder



Dennis Groves is the founder of OWASP. He is a well known thought leader in application security whose work focuses on multidisciplinary approaches to information security risk management. He is currently an expert for the UK mirror of ISO subcommittee 27, WG4.

Great minds *go on to* great places

What were your reasons for choosing RHBNC?

I did not apply to any other universities. Royal Holloway was my one and only choice because I have had friends that graduated from Royal Holloway's, Information Security Group. They gave the course top marks, and I trust their judgement. The location is stunning and so is the Founder's Building. Additionally, I was very impressed with the contributions the ISG has made to the Information Security industry in general. I have been in the Information Security Industry for over 20 years now so you could say that the course was of more importance to me than the college itself.

What do you wish you had been told whilst you were a student?

Nothing, I couldn't be more pleased with the education at Royal Holloway. However, I may have come in with a different context than most students.

What are your fondest memories of being in your department?

My fellow students. I don't know how I could have gotten through it all without my fellow students. There were times you were so tired and really stuck that you wanted to give up; and you really can't get through those difficult times without the

support of your friends. Royal Holloway gave me not only friends but a support network for life.

What was life like at Royal Holloway?

It was very laid back. The Englefield Green area is very peaceful so I had a great opportunity to come home after class and focus on my studies.

What would you say to someone thinking of studying here?

I would certainly recommend it. It will be a challenge, but studying at RHUL will certainly be worth the work.

What is the most important thing that RHUL has taught you either as a person or in your career?

Having completed my Master's degree has opened many doors for me both in the UK and in the USA. I never realised how important having a degree is as I have always managed without one. It certainly made me realise how much I have been held back by not having one.

What would you say were the greatest skills learned during your degree?

I would say that the greatest skill and lesson I learned was to approach a problem from all sides and to think of a more holistic solution to it.

Was your passion for your jobs/subject area found whilst at the College?

I wouldn't say it was found whilst at college. I already had a passion for Information Security. Royal Holloway was simply the best institution to continue my studies of the subject in the entire UK.

What was your favourite part of the course? Why?

My favourite part of the course was the dissertation writing. It was the most challenging for me, but I enjoyed it immensely. I was able to research a problem I had been thinking about for years.

Who are your creative influences in the ISG world?

There are many people in this industry I respect, but all of them are approaching fundamental problems in very different ways. It is really the Information Security community I admire and draw inspiration from.

Who inspired you whilst studying and do you still keep in touch?

Certainly Fred Piper, Andreas Fuchsberger, Robert Carolina and Garant Price among many others. The students studying with me during my education at RHUL were certainly a great inspiration as well. I have kept in touch with the majority of my lecturers and the ISG in general. I also hold regular OWASP meetings at Royal Holloway.



people with passion

“Royal Holloway gave me not only friends but a support network for life”

Do you think your studies have helped you in your career?

My studies have certainly helped my career. The Royal Holloway degree has opened many doors into management for me.

Please tell us about your current role at OWASP.

I am the founder of OWASP, in fact the Founders of OWASP are all graduates of the ISG – so you could definitely say that the home of OWASP is the ISG. OWASP now has over 37,000 members worldwide, and 10 chapters around the world. My current project is to start the OWASP Ghana chapter. After my graduation I have remained in touch with the both the Royal Holloway ISG group and with my fellow Alumni. Additionally, I have even made friends with number students that have joined the ISG following my graduation. For example, Theodore Sagoe (class of 2012) approached me about starting an OWASP chapter in Ghana and we have been working on this over the last six months to make it a reality.

What are your favourite aspects of your job?

My favourite aspect of my current role is that I have the ability to influence positive change within the organisation that I work in.

What is the best project that you have been involved in recently?

I would have to say it has been working with the OWASP AppSensor. The OWASP AppSensor is a software development pattern that assumes an application can operate in a hostile environment and defend itself from attack.

Another project I am tangentially connected with, but very excited about, is the OWASP O2 project. OWASP is an extensible static analysis framework you can use to automate security testing from black-box testing to code review. Recently O2 leveraged the Roslyn framework and CAT.NET (a product I was responsible for at Microsoft) to detect security issues in code in real time as the software developer types!

How has Royal Holloway/ISG helped you get where you are today?

Royal Holloway and the ISG have helped me get a broader perspective of my field, and the education I received here has opened doors for better commercial positions within my field. I would say to those people who are considering a career in this field of work to get in touch with OWASP and do a bit of research into the different roles within Information Security. That way, people can make an educated choice and find out if this field is really for them.

Why is it important to you to do a profile and to remain involved in your College?

I am very proud to be an alumnus of Royal Holloway. It is important for me to remain involved in the college as I feel it is important to continue to encourage the incoming class of students.

What does being an alumnus mean to you?

I would certainly recommend Royal Holloway as a place to study, and I always recommend the University to my contacts.

Have you attended any of our alumni events? What did you think of them?

I attended one ISG dinner some years ago. It was a very lovely experience. I met other alumni at the event and made some great contacts. I would certainly attend again.

What do you think of Higher our alumni magazine?

I have only gotten one copy of Higher. From what I read, the magazine is very nice. I am glad the university continues to attempt to keep the Alumni connected in this way.

Why would you recommend us as a place to study? Do you recommend us to your contacts?

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For more Alumni Profiles visit: www.rhul.ac.uk/alumni/profiles/