**HAMILTON RENTALS**
IT & AV Rental Solutions

# Putting Cyber Security Skills to the Test

Hamilton Rentals puts everything in place to ensure that 60 young finalists in a cyber security competition encounter no unexpected challenges on the day

**The smooth implementation of IT infrastructure and equipment ensures 60 young competitors can battle it out live at the national finals of CyberCenturion VI.**

# Background

## Developing the next generation of cyber security talent

Cyber Security Challenge UK works with industry partners, government bodies, educators and students. Its mission: to encourage young people whose diverse thinking and skills are suited to a career in cyber.

As a not-for-profit organisation, Cyber Security Challenge UK is focused on enabling an inclusive pipeline of talent for the cyber security industry. It does this by driving awareness and opening up opportunities to the widest possible range of young people – regardless of their gender or background – through a specially designed programme of events and resources for schools.

For the past six years the organisation has also acted as the UK delivery partner for CyberCenturion – a UK-wide competition that gives young people aged 12-18 an opportunity to demonstrate their cyber security prowess.

Sponsored by the Northrop Grumman Foundation, CyberCenturion is sister to the long-established US CyberPatriot competition which has helped inspire thousands of young people to pursue STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects in further education.

Two-thousand players registered for this year's UK competition, with teams completing a series of virtual qualifying rounds to win a place in the live UK finals where they would battle it out on the day to become CyberCenturion VI champions.

"Over a period of five months, the competition is designed to give competitors their first real-world experience of cyber security – culminating in an action-packed finals that sees the top scoring teams come together to test their teamwork and prowess," explains Nina Roberts, Operations Manager at Cyber Security Challenge UK.

"We need to be certain that on the day, everything works as expected and that everyone has equitable access to the resources and kit they'll need to perform optimally as a team in the live competition."

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# The requirement

## Resourcing a high performing event

Organising the live finals requires extensive planning to ensure that every aspect of the competition environment works like clockwork on the day.
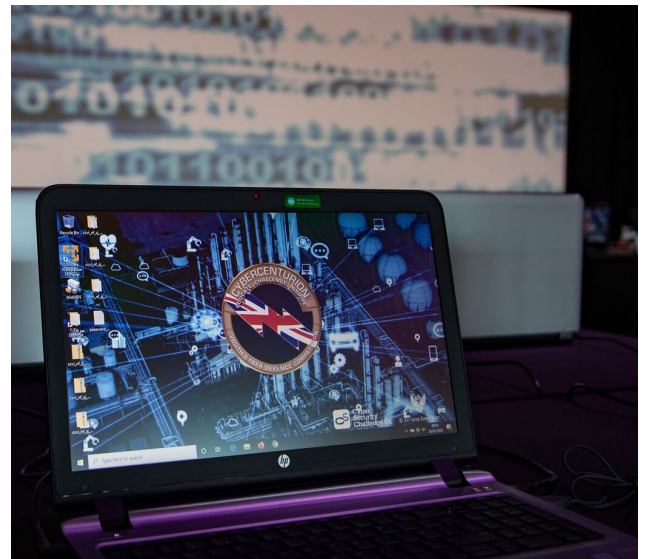
"This is a major undertaking that involves provisioning 60 laptops pre-loaded with the challenges each four-person team will work on. Plus, we need to be confident we have the appropriate networking infrastructure in place so competitors can access online resources – and collaborate with confidence."

Determined to ensure no player is potentially disadvantaged by the technology at their fingertips, the organising team goes to great lengths to ensure that everything is primed at the venue and ready to go on the day.

"We're a small team that's responsible for managing every aspect of the event," says Rae McClelland, Programme Manager at Cyber Security Challenge UK.

"We needed to find a trusted partner to provide all the IT infrastructure used by competitors. We initially contacted Hamilton Rentals to take care of installing cabling and networking at the venue itself – but quickly realised that they could offer us so much more."

"As well as saving us valuable time and effort on the logistics and equipment front, working with Hamiltons would release our precious manpower resources to focus on more strategic tasks."

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# The solution

## An end-to-end solution

Hamiltons' specialists undertook an initial survey of the competition venue to evaluate the best approach for implementing the data and power cabling the finalists would require.

"Hamilton recommended building a VLAN and deploying ethernet and power via switches on each team's desks to assure bullet-proof connectivity for individual players," explains Nina.

In addition to putting the physical infrastructure in place for the day's event, Hamilton Rentals was also responsible for providing 60 laptops, plus spares and peripherals like mice, all of which would be pre-loaded with the competition tasks.

"Last year it took my team literally weeks to prepare the laptops in readiness for the competition," says Nina. "This time, thanks to Hamiltons' providing us with an imaging service, all we had to do was configure one laptop – and they took care of replicating the rest of the fleet to these exact specifications."

Everything undertaken by Hamilton Rentals was designed to make it much easier and more streamlined for the operations team to ensure that all players would be competing on a level playing field.

"Hamilton took care of all logistics and planning relating to the delivery, set up and equipment provision for the competition day itself – and were on hand to provide additional technical support if we needed it," continues Nina.

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# The outcomes

## A hitch-free event

The day before the finals were due to take place, a team of specialists from Hamilton Rentals arrived at the venue to commence the infrastructure and equipment set up tasks.

"Hamilton Rentals were highly organised and efficient. Working alongside our personnel, they quickly and methodically went about installing the cabling and networking ports and setting up the laptops. Within a matter of hours, everything was in place ready to run the event," says Nina.

Ensuring the appropriate deployment of all cabling and equipment installed at the venue was an important health and safety consideration.

With 60 young competitors and their supporters moving around the space, together with competition organisers and invigilators, ensuring there were no trip hazards was a top priority.

"Everything was visibly accessible, appropriately placed and protected. We were truly impressed by how neatly the team worked and their strict adherence to H&S standards," continues Nina.

On the day of the competition, everything worked as expected. Plus, the operations team had the added confidence of knowing that Hamilton Rentals' team of network engineers were just a call away should anything in the infrastructure environment failed.

"Hamilton truly helped us ensure the integrity of the competition environment for the young people who participated on the day," says Nina

# Why Hamilton Rentals?

"Working with Hamilton Rentals meant we didn't have to worry about any aspect relating to the sourcing, set up and installation of the technology used on the day by our young competitors. They handled everything from the provision of the equipment to delivery, installation, breakdown and shipment – giving us just one point of contact to liaise with to make everything happen," says Rae.

"From the get-go I felt we were working with people who were a trusted extension of our team," she continues. "Nothing was too big an ask and they clearly knew what they were doing."

But Hamilton Rentals also went above and beyond their initial brief to bring additional value to the project.

"The moment their specialists completed the initial site survey of the venue, they came back with suggestions about the best way to implement the network – an approach that eliminated unnecessary complexity and cost," confirms Nina.

"With regard to the actual room layout and set up, they dug deep to make it work in the best way possible for everyone concerned. If we ran a similar event in the future, I wouldn't hesitate to get them involved right from the start – their insights and recommendations certainly helped ensure that this year's competition ran like a dream."

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## Contact us

With over 35 years of experience, Hamilton Rentals delivers Technology and IT services to organisations and events of every shape and size. Our capabilities cover technology provision, engineering, logistics, consulting, project and managed services, and asset retirement, making us perfectly positioned to help with your IT and AV requirements.

See how Hamilton Rentals can help your business succeed. Please contact us on info@hamilton.co.uk

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