

# Rob Joyce, the NSA's "hacker-in-chief," appointed White House cybersecurity coordinator

## Details on the anticipated appointment



**Rob Joyce**

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*Why are we successful? We put the time in to know that network, to know it better than the people who designed it and the people who are securing it, and that's the bottom line"*

—Rob Joyce

### Background

Trained as an engineer, Joyce graduated from Clarkson University in 1989 with a degree in electrical and computer engineering, followed by a master's degree in electrical engineering from Johns Hopkins in 1993.

### NSA tenure

With over 25 years of experience at the NSA, Joyce has served the agency's defensive and offensive missions. **Following his time in the Information Assurance Directorate, Joyce joined the Tailored Access Operations (TAO) unit, taking over as chief in April 2013.** As the elite hacking team tasked with gaining access to foreign computers and networks, the secretive TAO is believed to support a range of government operations, from intelligence gathering to preparing exploits for potential use in a cyberattack.

### Cybersecurity coordinator

President Trump has appointed Joyce his cybersecurity coordinator, a role previously occupied by Michael Daniel during the Obama administration. **In this capacity, Joyce will oversee U.S. cybersecurity strategy and policy, working with federal agencies, the private sector and foreign countries.** While privacy advocates and technology firms are expected to be wary of his NSA credentials, and particularly where he stands regarding the disclosure of zero-day vulnerabilities, others see his expertise in cyber offense and defense as a strong advantage. "Knowing and being informed on how cyber operations work, knowing the art of what is possible," said a former U.S.-CERT director, "is extremely valuable in helping to develop cyber strategies and inform a successful cyber defense."

Sources: Joseph Marks, "Trump cyber czar brings deep expertise but maybe some baggage too," Nextgov, March 13, 2017; Andrea Peterson, "The NSA has its own team of elite hackers," The Washington Post, August 29, 2013.