

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Securing cyber security at all fronts

ROZANA SANI
rsani@nst.com.my

CYBERSECURITY Malaysia (CSM), the national cybersecurity specialist agency under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, is working closely with universities in the country to develop talent that covers a comprehensive set of expertise in the cybersecurity field.

Its chief executive officer Datuk Dr Amirudin Abdul Wahab said cybersecurity professionals in the country is lacking — like elsewhere in the world — and must be developed in the face of rising cyber risks, particularly those brought about by the advent of the fourth industrial revolution.

He said in the case of securing an organisation against cybersecurity breaches and intrusions, the approach taken is often reactive rather than proactive.

"Building the right talent for the country is not just about having people who do hacking where system break-ins occur from the outside. Instead, it's about having people with both offensive and defensive capabilities.

"That means, there must be experts who can protect the organisation when people are attacking, finding the vulnerable points within the organisation and managing them, and at the same time having the forensics component where the attack and attacker are identified to be presented in a report for enforcers to use in the court of law," said Amirudin.

He said when engaging with universities, CSM let each university identify specific areas in which they would like to have expertise in.

"In Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) for example, we collaborated on the first Masters in Cybersecurity programme in the country which has been running since 2013. It has 20 CSM team members involved and has participants handling real world equipment and data.



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"In due course, we will be introducing three other modules for fintech (financial technology). This will be in collaboration with Standard Chartered," he said.

In International Islamic University Malaysia, CSM has contributed three out of 12 modules in the varsity's Masters in Protective Security programme. CSM is also working with Universiti Pertahanan Malaysia to formulate a degree programme in cybersecurity.

"We have also collaborated with Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) to work on talent in research and development whereby we are co-developing cybercrime intelligence capabilities apart from working together on a masters programme in the field of security analytics.

"In Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM), we've developed research talents in malware eradication and remediation. In Universiti Putra Malaysia there was very good cryptography efforts, so we collaborated on that," Amirudin added.

He said CSM believes that each institute of higher learning has its strength and that together they would be able to provide talents for a complete national front in cyber security.

Amirudin was speaking at a press conference held after the prize giving ceremony of the Cyber Heroes Competition 2017 recently, an inaugural cyber defense competition organised by UKM, Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), Standard Chartered Bank and CSM.

The event saw the participation of 20 teams from 10 local universities in a search for new and highly potential cyber security talents while promoting the culture among young generation.

In his speech, UKM vice-chancellor Tan Sri Professor Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali said the event was not only meant to send powerful messages of global security awareness and to make cyberspace a safer place but at the same time, to also

provide exposure to undergraduate students about building a lucrative career and the professionalism needed in this industry.

"I believe that this competition will create awareness on the importance of 'defense' over 'hacking' and to make students see that 'defense' is much more beneficial than 'hacking' activities. I am equally confident that this competition would help develop new talents in cyber defence among the younger generations in Malaysia," he said.

At the meantime, Standard Chartered Global Business Services Collective Intelligence and Command Centre and Technology Operations global head Mohamed Abdel Razek highlighted that the banking group take cyber issues very seriously as it is integrated with their technology services.

"It's good to see the MoU we signed with UKM and CSM coming to live in a very collaborative sense and not just paper work. It's great to be participating and sponsoring such events because the development of local talent is all in our favour as we are always on the lookout for the right talent in the private sector, specifically in banking where it is paramount for cyber risks to be managed and to be proactive in the management, not in the reactive sense," he said.

During the competition earlier, participants were required to defend their critical asset from being attacked by identifying and mitigating the attack, preserving the evidence, analysing the incident, presenting and recommending preventive action for future threats based on real-life scenario.

The top five teams had 15 minutes each to present their findings and to convince the judges to win an incident response project of a company.

The team from Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN) came out tops in the competition. They not only won RM5,000 in cash but also RM18,000 worth of forensics training from CSM.



(From left) Nazrul Affiq Ahmad, Amimar Mokhzani Faeq Mohamed Fauad, Amirul Anwar Md Zulkifli and Lim Kien Seng from UNITEN celebrating their win at the prize giving ceremony of the Cyber Heroes Competition 2017.

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