

Experts lament lack of protocols

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KOCHI: While everybody is talking about the need for cyber security, there are no governing protocols for the search engines and websites, opined many speakers at the first Indo-US workshop on cyber security, cyber crime and cyber forensics at the Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences in Kochi on Thursday.

The discussion was set rolling by Principal Scientific Advisor to Government of India R Chidambaram who said that the challenge of cyber security was multi-dimensional owing to the very nature of cyber space, which provided anonymity as well as ever-increasing sophistication of attack tools.

Speaking on the 'Self Regulatory Initiatives for Data Security in India,' Chairman of Data Security Council of India, NASSCOM, Shyamal Ghosh, said his organisation was working on introducing the concept of self-regulation in different software companies in the country.

"The aim is to send out a message to the global sourcing service-providers, and a message to clients world wide that India was a secure destination for outsourcing where privacy and protection of customer data are enshrined in the global best practices followed by the industry," he said. He said the DSCI was focusing on data protection, best practices, capacity building, enforcement, independent oversight, dispute resolution and speedy trial of cyber crimes.

Senior official of Kerala Police T Vinod Kumar was more blunt.

"There are only 160 cyber crimes that have been reported. What does that indicate? That people are sure th at the criminals cannot be caught," he said. But the fact is that there is no security protocol in place for these foreign cyber companies which are having a lot of Indian data also in their kitty. The police official said it was time that companies worked out ways to secure systems and also catch criminals.

B Menezes from IIT Mumbai stressed the need for a holistic approach to information security and said that hacking for fun has given way to hacking for profit.

"This has spawned a huge underground cyber economy, which now earns considerable revenue through the sale of stolen bank account information, credit card details and occasionally cold-blooded extortion," he said. Many large corporates, wary of largescale compromises of company secrecy have upped their spending on computer security.

The three-day seminar being organised by the Amrita Vishwavidyapeetham and the State University of New York (SUNY) will conclude on Friday. The seminar is supported by the Indo-US Science and Technology (IUSSTF) and the National Science Foundation of the US Government.

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