

Cyber Guardian

Publication for your online safety

2023 Cybersecurity Highlights: Safeguarding Our Digital Future EMPOWERING 3,000 INDIVIDUALS OF CYBER SAFETY



In the year 2023, Sri Lanka CERT was working to provide training for over 3,000 individuals in cybersecurity. This diverse group includes information technology officers at various levels in the public sector, teachers responsible for technology subjects, media scholars, and information technology officers in the private sector. Additionally, students from universities, schools and faculties of education have gained substantial knowledge about cybersecurity. These training sessions align with the Information and Cyber Security Policy for Government Organizations.

Sri Lanka CERT has conducted 34 workshops covering cybersecurity principles, governance, risk, and compliance (GRC), incident response and data recovery, existing laws related to cybersecurity, and areas related to computer application security and network security. These workshops specifically targeted officers designated as Information Security Officers of government institutions. Sri Lanka CERT, in collaboration with the Ministry of Technology, has issued a circular mandating the implementation of cybersecurity in public institutions.

Strengthening Cyber Defenses in Organizations

Over the past year, Sri Lanka CERT has made significant contributions to enhancing cybersecurity in both public and private institutions. The institute conducted 11 risk assessments as an initiative to establish governance, risk, and compliance (GRC), along with 118 website and application security assessments, 9 mobile phone assessments, 14 network assessments, and 23 forensic investigations. These actions have supported the improvement of cybersecurity in respective institutions.



Pioneering Projects for a Secure Digital Sri Lanka

In 2023, the Sri Lanka CERT undertook several nationally significant projects:

a. National Cyber Security Operations Centre (NCSOC):

Upon completion of this project, cybersecurity incident monitoring and resolution will be managed around the clock (27x7) for government organizations. Initial funding for the hardware was received at the end of 2023, and the project is expected to be completed in 2024 and 2025.

b. National Certificate Authority (NCA):

This initiative is focused on establishing a central authority responsible for the issuance of digital certificates to institutions that, in turn, issue their own digital certificates, with "LankaPay" acting as the issuing institution.

c. National Vocational Qualification (NVQ):

In collaboration with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission and the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority, the Sri Lanka CERT has developed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) necessary for the National Diploma in Cyber Security. As of now, 24 students have enrolled in this diploma course, and we have already received more than 50 applications for the year 2024.

20,000 Cyber Threats and Social Media Incidents



In 2023, the Sri Lanka CERT was reported 20,033 incidents related to social network security and 409 incidents related to cybersecurity. The institute provided solutions to these problems with the assistance of local and international organizations. These incidents included threats and intimidation via the internet and social media, as well as issues arising from fake accounts. There were an increasing number of cybersecurity complaints involving online harassment, stalking, and the targeting of individuals or groups.

Criminals utilized social media platforms and other online forums for intimidation, threats, or harm. Hate crimes, based on characteristics such as race, religion, ethnicity, and gender, as well as unauthorized access to personal data, data breaches, identity theft, phishing attacks, malware threats, and extortion based on sensitive data, were reported. The Sri Lanka CERT highlighted the impact of not taking precautions, failing to implement safety measures, and displaying uninformed behavior when using the internet and social media. They emphasized the importance of using these platforms with an awareness of cybersecurity.

Educating the public about cybersecurity is crucial. To initiate this, the first step was taken in August to formally commence the communication process using both traditional and social media. As part of this effort, 10 Rupavahini programs, 7 radio programs, and 9 printed media articles were utilized to educate the public. Additionally, 6 newsletters are published every month in Sinhala, Tamil, and English. Social media platforms played a significant role in disseminating these messages about cybersecurity to the general public, with 170 specific social media posts created and shared. Effective support was provided by each media channel involved.



Amplifying Cybersecurity Awareness Across the Nation

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Tuesday 28th November 2023 7.00 - 8.00 am
Announcer: Saundi Thavam
Produced by Indira Nawagamuwa

Mr. Viraj Kariyapperuma

The Coffee Hour with morning host

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