Georgia Tech Information Security Center releases cyber threats forecast for 2011

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The Georgia Tech Information Security Center (GTISC) today announced the release of the GTISC Emerging Cyber Threats Report for 2011, outlining the top three areas of security risk and concern for consumer and business Internet and computer users. The report was released today at the annual GTISC Security Summit on the Evolving Nature of Cyber Security Threats. The summit gathers leading industry and academic leaders who have distinguished themselves in the field of cyber security.

According to the report, an increase in the number of mobile and networked devices provides an enticing target for cyber criminals to steal data and thwart the functioning of systems in a variety of venues from hospitals to utility providers.

For 2011, GTISC is forecasting three key cyber security areas where threats are expected to increase and evolve:

- Cyber Threats Targeting Physical Systems: As infrastructure services such as electric grid and utilities become networked and connect to the Internet, they will face greater risk of disruption and misuse. In addition, cyber attack is also a growing risk for healthcare systems as more medical offices and hospitals become connected. What's more, the speed of updating the security of devices in these environments may be hampered as devices involved with such systems may be subject to regulatory

guidelines.

- Botnets: Specifically large-scale attacks that utilize more targeted malware to evade detection; in addition cyber criminals are now making more efficient use of malicious software and have been re-launching previously thwarted attacks.

- Mobile Devices and Social Networking: As more open mobile device platforms grow in popularity and more applications become available, these devices will become more attractive targets of attacks. In addition, cyber criminals are using Twitter and Facebook accounts to lure users into handing over personal and sensitive information.

"We have to move away from the reactive mode of addressing cyber security threats and must proactively work to understand new threats and develop effective ways to contain them," said Mustaque Ahamad, director of GTISC. "We are doing this for several of the key threats outlined in the Emerging Threats report and we look forward to working with our partners to build a more secure cyber space."

Provided by Georgia Institute of Technology

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