

Singapore boosts cyber security after hacking incidents

August 26 2014



File photo shows a person claiming to speak for activist hacker group Anonymous issuing a warning to the Singapore government over Internet licensing rules, November 2013

Singapore on Tuesday announced new measures to strengthen cyber security to prevent a recurrence of attacks on government websites including those of its president and prime minister.

Information minister Yaacob Ibrahim said the government is upgrading

its Cyber-Watch Centre, allowing it to track malicious activities and respond swiftly when there are [security](#) breaches.

The upgrades are expected to be completed by January 2015.

"Large-scale cyber security breaches have made headlines and raised public concerns," Yaacob said in a speech to a conference of experts in Singapore, referring to attacks against US retailer Target and other international incidents.

"Governments, businesses, manufacturers and consumers must guard against data leakage, unauthorised access to corporate resources and malware attack against their networks," he said.

Yaacob said the government is working to increase the number of homegrown cyber security experts by partnering with local universities that offer specialist degrees.

"The biggest growth in manpower requirements will be in the areas of security operations, security engineering and technology," he added.

Apart from dedicated [cyber security](#) experts, the government and business also need more professionals in areas like network engineering and application development to guard against [cyber threats](#), Yaacob said.

A rash of attacks in Singapore last year targeted the websites of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and President Tony Tan, as well as other government portals.

Singaporean James Raj Arokiasamy, 35, is facing 162 [criminal charges](#) for various computer misuse offences, including illegally accessing the parliamentary district website of Lee and a reporter's blog on The Straits Times's website.

A 43-year-old local man was fined Sg\$8,000 (US\$6,400) in June for illegally accessing the website of the Istana, the president's office.

His accomplice, an 18-year-old student, was placed on probation for 12 months.

The rash of attacks late last year took place after a self-proclaimed spokesperson for international hacker group Anonymous appeared in a video to demand the scrapping of a law requiring local news websites to obtain annual licences.

Singapore strictly regulates the traditional media, but insists the licensing rules enacted in June 2013 do not impinge on Internet freedom.

None of the hackers convicted or currently facing criminal charges have commented on any ties with Anonymous.

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