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The Data Recovery lab handles hard disk repair, data recovery and data sanitisation. — NORAFIFI EHSAN/The Star

To serve and protect

CyberSecurity widens its net to offer services beyond just security. >2

1 Flight test: CyberSecurity made a replica of the flight simulator found in Captain Zaharie Ahmad Shah's house to determine if the MH370 pilot made a U-turn.

2 Privacy is one of the top priorities for CyberSecurity when it attempts data recovery.

3 CyberSecurity head of department for digital forensics Mohd Zabri Adil Talib and Aswami (right) say CyberSecurity is in the process of drafting a standard for CCTVs used in public areas.

4 For older hard disk models, CyberSecurity has to shop online for parts before it can initiate data recovery.

5 The Cyber Forensics Lab under the Digital Forensics Department develops high tech tools to help solve crimes.

— Photos: NORAFIFI EHSAN/ The Star

Firing up forensics

CyberSecurity is using its expertise in security and forensics to expand its services to the masses.

By **LEE KAH LENG**
bytz@thestar.com.my

IN 1997, MyCERT (Malaysia Computer Emergency Response Team) was formed to tackle emerging security issues when the Internet was still in its infancy. It soon became a part of a bigger unit called Niser (National ICT Security and Emergency Response Centre) to guard our digital borders before finally becoming the entity we know today – CyberSecurity Malaysia.

Beyond the name change, CyberSecurity has also evolved as an organisation, pushing the boundaries of what it can offer to government agencies, private sector and even the public.

Into the future

Housed in CyberSecurity's facility in Seri Kembangan, Kuala Lumpur, is the Cyber Forensics X Lab where the organisation researches and develops cutting edge technologies to help combat digital crime.

The lab creates its own high grade tools so it doesn't have to buy exorbitantly priced professional equipment, says CyberSecurity's vice-president for cyber security responsive services, Dr Aswami Ariffin.

It is now developing facial recognition technologies using Microsoft Kinect, a peripheral for the Xbox One and Xbox 360 gaming consoles, which uses a camera and infra-red light to track the player.

CyberSecurity chose Kinect because the software it's working on will make Kinect function as well as any professional tool but at a fraction of the cost.

Its technology works by identifying unique facial features of a person such as eye-to-eye distance, width of the nose, and shape of the cheekbone using the Kinect's ability to sense depth.

The biometrics will then be used to find a match in a photo or video.

Sharpening the focus

As advanced as facial recognition technology is, it can only go so far, as it's highly reliant on the quality of the video or photo that's captured.

"Most CCTVs are only for show and even if they are in good working condition they capture very low quality footage and often are not of much help in criminal cases," Aswami says.

Most building owners install CCTVs to fulfil the requirement set by insurance companies, he laments, adding that most are not even strategically positioned.

In the 2007 murder case of eight-year-old Nurin Jazlin, a CCTV captured a motorcyclist dropping off a bag containing her remains in front of a shoplot but the footage was poor.

It was up to CyberSecurity to enhance the video but it could do little as the quality was beyond recovery. It even tried extracting multiple still images from the video but was unable to clearly identify the facial features, number plate or other useful information.

To prevent this problem in the future, the organisation is drafting a Video Quality in Public Safety industry standard for CCTVs in public areas.

It's still a work in progress but CyberSecurity is looking at recommending at least a 5-megapixel camera with 500GB of storage. The higher the quality, the bigger the storage space that will be required, he says.

The recommendations are based on its study of smart cities in Germany, South Korea and Japan where the use of high quality CCTVs have kept the crime to a minimum.

CyberSecurity also offers certification through its MyCC (Malaysian Common Criteria Evaluation and Certification) scheme. The scheme evaluates and certifies the security functionality of security products against the ISO/IEC 15408 standard.

On guard

Earlier this year, the agency launched a new service called CyberDEF to help organisations mitigate attacks such as Advanced Persistent Threats which target a single entity.

It will help organisations identify loopholes, vulnerabilities and existing threats in their network by collaborating with international partners.

Instead of just providing software support, CyberSecurity will perform drills on-premise to test the readiness of the organisation to handle cyber attacks.

CyberDEF will assist organisations in developing a structured and coordinated approach to handling security incidents with the help of well-defined policies and procedures, he says.

"This includes setting up a response team for organisations that don't have one yet," he says.

"The exercise is structured around a scenario that includes several incidents involving the most common types of attacks. The members need to perform their investigation/analysis of the incident and come out with the mitigation solution."

If a threat is detected, CyberSecurity will perform data recovery services and data sanitisation services, if needed.

However, a lot of cyber attacks today still use social engineering to trick users into revealing their password or installing malware on their machines.

For instance, the 2010 Stuxnet attack on Iranian nuclear facility relied on infecting the USB drives of the employees to get the malware into the facility.

"The modus operandi of cyber criminals have changed. Back in the early days, the target were machines and systems but today the human is the weakest link," he says.

To educate the public it has started a CyberSAFE initiative to raise the awareness on potential risks and issues facing Internet users.

On of its most recent campaigns was Digi CyberSAFE where it reached out to school children and teachers.

Data rescue

For the public, CyberSecurity offers two main services – Cyber999 and CyberSecurity Clinic (MyCSC).

Cyber999 is a hotline (1-300-88-2999) for users to report computer security incidents while MyCSC offers consultation, as well as repair and recovery services for computers, hard disks and smartphones.

"To date hundreds of thousands of incidents have been reported to us, including problems as minor as laptop issues, and we are capable of handling almost anything that relates to Internet and digital," says Aswami.

One of the sought-after services is data recovery from a faulty hard disk.

Aswami says that in most cases the problem is due to a malfunctioning mechanical arm or electrical board.

Failures are usually caused by impact or drops which will most likely damage the mechanical arm or electrical spikes or surges which will fry the board.

To initiate recovery, CyberSecurity will first have to replace the damaged part and this is made difficult by the fact that companies release new models very quickly and phase out older ones.

Although it has a well-stocked store for parts, at times it has to resort to purchasing second hand models from the Internet, he says.

Simple data recovery from a damaged thumbdrive costs about RM100 but for hard disks the cost depends on the storage size and complexity of the repair, generally costing about RM500 or more.

For a proper quote, CyberSecurity has to first diagnose the issue, he says.

"Our prices are very competitive compared with data recover service offered by the private sector," says Aswami.

But what's even more important is the data – customers need to trust the organisation they are handing their information to.

"We are a government agency and trust is important to us. Users do not have to worry about privacy or tampering," he says.

"When we perform our analysis, we don't look into the files unless there is a need to do so as we have strict ethical guidelines."

Fraud is No.1 cyber crime

FRAUD has been the number one cyber crime in this country for the past five years, according to CyberSecurity. This is based on reports received by the Malaysia Computer Emergency Response Team (MyCERT), said Aaron Ikram Mohktar, senior executive of CyberSecurity Outreach and Corporate Communication.

A recent survey found that Malaysians spend an average of 20 hours a week online, he said, adding: "The more time you spend online, the higher the risk of you becoming a victim of cyber crime.

"Even if a person spends just an hour a week on the Internet, the chances of him or her becoming a victim of cyber crime are about 64%," he said when speaking at the Safecities and CyberSecurity session during the International Fire and Security Exhibition and Conference (IFSEC) South-East Asia 2015 recently.

"So it is not a matter of 'will you become a victim of cyber crime' but 'when you will become a victim of cyber crime'," he added.

"To avoid becoming a victim, you must increase your level of awareness on security ... like never taking it easy on the need to update your computer antivirus," Aaron Ikram said.

He said that CyberSecurity had introduced programmes to increase awareness on cyber security and educate Internet users on how to protect themselves from cyber crime.

Other cyber crimes reported included cyber harrasment, denial of service, intrusion, and others which are content related. — Bernama

Police cannot link burnt car to prosecutor

HUTAN MELINTANG: Police believe that the burnt car found in an oil palm plantation here is part of a premeditated crime but hesitate to connect it to the disappearance of Deputy Public Prosecutor Anthony Kevin Morais.

Hilir Perak OCPD Asst Comm Mohd Shuhaily Mohd Zain said the car, which was found in Kampung Sungai Samak here, was totally burnt, making it difficult to ascertain the model and who it belonged to.

He said the chassis and registration numbers could not be traced due to the condition of the car.

"So at the moment we cannot link the car to the missing person.

"We have roped in the K9 and forensic units but we have failed to get any evidence," he told a press conference at the Hutan Melintang jetty, which has been turned into an operations centre for the tracing of victims of a vessel that sank on Thursday.

ACP Shuhaily said the Chemistry Department was carrying out investigations.

He said witnesses claimed they heard an explosion at between 1am and 2am on Saturday but the police were only informed about it at 10am.

According to Nasromi Maslah, 45,

Probe begins: Forensic police personnel at the scene of the burnt car at the oil palm plantation in Kampung Sungai Samak, Hutan Melintang. — Bernama

she saw a burnt car when she was on her way to the plantation. She was riding a motorcycle to a stall nearby for breakfast.

"I went closer and took some photos using my handphone before heading to the village head's house to inform him about the matter," she said.

Village head Ahmad Hilmi Yunus, 50, said Nasromi came to his house at 8.15am on Saturday.

He and other villagers then went to the location, but could not find anyone inside the car.

"The incident probably took place in the wee hours of Saturday, because a villager had passed by the

area at 6pm on Friday but did not see any car there," he added.

He claimed that he found a file and several pieces of paper that were burnt inside the car.

However, according to ACP Shuhaily, there were no documents in the car because the inside was also totally burnt.

El Nino effect to be felt at year-end

'GODZILLA': Malaysia to see drier weather, says meteorologist

FAREZZA HANUM RASHID
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE El Nino weather phenomenon, which is expected to hit the Philippines at the end of the year, will affect Malaysia, especially Sabah and Sarawak.

According to a senior meteorologist at the Malaysian Meteorological Department's (MET) National Weather Centre, Dr Mohd Hisham Mohd Anip, the upcoming El Nino, which has been dubbed "the Godzilla El Nino", will start in the Pacific Ocean, and Borneo, which is on the Western rim of the Pacific Ocean, will experience less rain.

"Peninsular Malaysia will see a decrease in rain, but not as drastic as Sabah and Sarawak. We are feeling it already. But at the moment, El Nino is at a moderate stage and is expected to get more intense in two to three months," he said.

El Nino begins with the warming of the waters in the Pacific Ocean and will result in wetter weather in the northern hemisphere, while the south will see drier weather.

Dr Hisham said Indonesia was badly hit by the dry weather brought by El Nino, resulting in the bush and forest fires there that led to the haze in Malaysia.

The dry weather will also affect agriculture, and water levels in dams, lakes and rivers will drop as the waters will evaporate faster.

"We need to be careful with our water consumption. Saving water from now would be wise," said Dr Hisham.

The year-end monsoon season would also be an irregular one, he said, as it would be drier than usual.

El Nino was first noticed by fishermen off the coast of South America in the 1600s, with the appearance of unusually warm water in the Pacific Ocean. The warmer waters are normally confined to the western Pacific by winds that blow from east to west, pushing the warmer water towards Indonesia and Australia.

The weather phenomenon occurs every two to seven years and the waters off the eastern Pacific can be up to 4°C warmer than usual.