

THE AUSTRALIAN

Hunted 'must become hunter' to combat cyber crime

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THE creation of a "hunter" with deep forensic, coding and reverse engineering skills was necessary to combat the increasing threat from cyber crime, an expert has warned.

Recently appointed Asia-Pacific director of the Global Institute for Cybersecurity + Research, Australian cyber security expert Craig Wright said there was a lack of fundamental skills in security training.

"Things like .NET have become very sexy. But from a security point of view, assembly language coding has far more relevance," Dr Wright said.

The GICSR is an international non-profit organisation seeking to advance a comprehensive range of cyber security initiatives, cyber innovations and research. It is funded by a range of organisations including the National Security Agency and Department of Homeland Security in the US.

"When you are reverse engineering malware, you need to have knowledge right down to the base level first, and there is little being done about it anymore," Dr Wright said.

"We are not going into the depth that is necessary to fight, combat and find where the cyber crime initiates."

Dr Wright, an adjunct lecturer at Charles Sturt University, said there should be a focus on creating security specialists with a deeper knowledge base.

"So when a piece of malware or some other code comes out they can understand it at a fundamental level, they can start reverse engineering it, they can pull it apart and see how it was created," he said.

Dr Wright, who designed the architecture for the world's first online casino, Lasseter's Online, in the Northern Territory, will focus on establishing a regional centre of excellence in cyber security for the GICSR.

In the past, Dr Wright has also designed and managed the implementation of many of the systems that protect the Australian stock exchange.

The centre of excellence will involve the region's leading research organisations and universities and will initially focus on establishing doctoral research projects in cyber security priority areas such as cyber extortion, identity theft and money laundering.

"The attacks are becoming more and more sophisticated and we are not banding together to actually fight it yet," he said.

Dr Wright said the GICSR would look to establish similar relationships with regional intelligence agencies, governments and security vendors to those that it has in place with the groups in the US.

The focus of the relationships would be to assist government, industry and security vendors to be much more aligned to cyber threats.

"Until we start approaching this collaboratively and thinking internationally, we are going to have huge problems and they are just going to get worse."