



OPENING REMARKS: CYBER RESILIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES PANEL — 2022 WEST COAST SECURITY CONFERENCE

Date: November 25, 2022

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KEY EVENTS

On November 25, 2022, Professor Julian Richards, Director of the Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies at the University of Buckingham (BUCSIS), delivered his opening remarks for panel five of the 2022 West Coast Security Conference. Professor Richards discussed the importance of understanding cyber threats to build resilience, supply shortage in the market of cybersecurity related jobs, and the importance of bringing academics and practitioners together in cyber discussions.

BACKGROUND

Professor Richards noted that cyber continues to become an ever-more complex phenomenon. The range of professions in cyber security are rapidly increasing. It is a challenging field because, at certain levels, it can be very technical, requiring an understanding of the threats themselves and where they are coming from. However, to have successful managers in the business, we need a range of technical and non-technical people with a solid-enough understanding of the risks. According to Professor Richards, that is a large component of the notion of resilience: a significant and important concept to the centre of contemporary cyber security discussions.

Professor Richards highlighted that some of the key elements BUCSIS takes into consideration are the skills and competencies required from those going to work in cyber related positions, focusing on a particular gap in the market: cyber skills from a managerial perspective. Many people now have the technical skills to delve into cyber security; however, not a lot of senior managers understand the concepts and the phenomenon of cyber or the basic language used in the cybersecurity space.

In the cyber world, professionals find themselves having to become familiar with relatively new concepts in financial crime and money laundering, such as the role of cryptocurrencies or non-fungible tokens (NFTs). To ensure resilience against these threats, one must be able to understand what the threats mean, how they are presented, and what the strategies will be.

Cyber threats sit on a spectrum spanning from the intensely technical and advanced side of attacks to more human centred threats. In addition, some threats are traditional, while others can be less traditional. Professor Richards expressed that, similar to how counter crime agencies used to discuss threats in the 1990s, “a very good strategy is to follow the money,” as crime, terrorism, and political violence are all underpinned to some extent by the need to move illegitimate funds around.

To conclude, Professor Richards stated that cyber threats are not something people can completely protect themselves against. Instead, threats have to be mitigated or disrupted, and citizens must learn to recover from such attacks when they happen. It is not a question of whether they will happen but about when they will happen. Looking at theoretical terms is good, but combining that with real experience and every aspect of public policy is even better. Bringing together academics and practitioners is critical to achieving this.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- As cyber continues to become a more complex and interesting phenomenon, understanding cyber threats and where they are coming from is at the centre of the critical notion of resilience.
- Many people have the technical skills to delve into cybersecurity, but there is a gap in cyber skills from a managerial perspective, which is the focus of BUCSIS.
- To make ourselves resilient against cyber threats, we need to be able to understand the concepts, how the threats are presented, and what the strategies are.
- Cyber threats can span from technically advanced threats to more human-behaviour centred threats.
- Cyber threats are not something we can completely protect ourselves against. Instead, we need to be able to mitigate and disrupt them and recover when they occur.



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