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PRESS RELEASE

Report on National Cybersecurity Week-2021

The pandemic caused disorder within the country in terms of economy, daily businesses and operations. It also impacted the netizens in cyberspace. With an abrupt increase in online users, the country saw an unprecedented number of phishing attacks targeting every walks of life. There were phishing scams related to courier services, purchase of masks and hand sanitizers, but most impacted were some of the mobile banking users who lost money to scammers. Even though BtCIRT and Banks created, broadcast and shared numerous awareness videos, advisories, and also participated in panel discussions through national broadcasting channels, the reach of the audiences had been less than the mark. Perhaps because of partial reach, the public kept being victim to the same phishing attacks.

In order to curb the rising issue, BtCIRT partnered with the Bank of Bhutan (BOB), Bhutan National Bank Ltd (BNBL), GIC-Bhutan Reinsurance Co. Ltd, Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) as part of the Financial Institutions Cyber Response Team (FICRT), along with other key partners Bhutan Telecom Ltd, Tashi Infocomm Ltd, Royal Bhutan Police, Thimphu Tech Park (TTPL), Department of Law and Order, Department of Information and Media, Media Council of Bhutan, Department of School Education and Bhutan Power Corporation Ltd, to launch country's first ever Cybersecurity Week. A working committee was formed to work on the plans and to launch the various initiatives.

The national **Cyber Security Week** was observed with the theme "*Be Cyber Safe - A step towards building the human firewall*", to achieve cybersecurity awareness among the general public, educate and inspire students in the cybersecurity field and upskill ICT Professionals to secure their work space. 5 workshops, 1 conference, 1 open awareness program and 1 school awareness program, along with social media awareness were conducted over week-long events from **20th to 25th of December, 2021**, targeting students, non IT professionals, ICT officers and the general public.



The cybersecurity week campaign began with online workshops on Basic cybersecurity practices, Network Security, MANRS for Network Operators and Web Applications security which ran for the first three days. They were followed by the cybersecurity conference that was presided by international and national speakers sharing their experiences on cyber attacks, policies and strategy development, risk assessment, awareness survey reports. The one day conference was closed with a panel discussion on “Emerging Cybercrimes and Cybersecurity Risks, and the State of Bhutan's Preparedness” with panel members representing BtCIRT, RBP, RENEW, BNBL and TTPL. The week of programs came to a close with cyber hygiene screenings in the Bank of Bhutan and the Bhutan National Bank on the 5th day and an awareness program for school students on the sixth day.

BtCIRT also engaged social media influencers “Denkers getaway” to conduct daily cybersecurity quiz nights and “Humans of Thimphu ” for story covers of victims of cyberbullying and cyber crimes. A selfie challenge was also conducted to engage young social media audiences.

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