



MINISTRY
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

From the desk of

Deputy Minister Pinky Kekana

Cyber Safety and Awareness Toolkit for School Learners

Friday, 28 August 2020

Time: 12h00 – 14h00

- Acting Deputy High Commissioner and Prosperity Counsellor, Mr Nick Latta
- Acting Director General, Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, Ms Nomvuyiso Batyi
- Chief Director: Cybersecurity Operations, Dr Kiru Pillay
- Chief Director, MST & Quality Enhancement Programmes, Mr Seliki Tlhabane
- UNISA, Professor Elmarie Kritze
- Managing Director of Wolfpack Information Risk, Craig Rosewarne
- Representatives from the British High Commission, UNISA, the Department of Communications & Digital Technologies, from all other government depts
- Ladies & Gentlemen

Covid19 has created a dependency on technology unseen in history. While this has been fortuitous for the advancement of technology, effectively positioning us in the throes of the 4th industrial revolution, it has also meant a very opportunistic and lucrative time for cybercriminals.

The global lockdown has meant more people are online, working remotely, making online purchases, and children schooling online - these have all opened up opportunities for the cybercriminal to target both individuals and organisations.

I want to share with you today some of the shocking statistics that are keeping CEO's, governments, and cybersecurity specialists globally, awake at night.

- During the Coronavirus period alone, there was a 238% rise in attacks on banks globally
- 80% of companies have seen an increase in cyberattacks since February 2020
- Sadly, while healthcare companies are fighting the pandemic, 27% of attacks have targeted the healthcare sector around the world
- Cloud based attacks rose 630% between January and April 2020
- Phishing attempts rose 600% since end of February 2020
- Organized crime gangs account for 55% of attacks
- 37% of credential theft breaches used stolen or weak credentials
- 75% of cyberattacks start with an email

And, just in case you're not shocked enough...

- 85% of people posting puppy photos are trying to scam you

So, if there is a cyberattack every 39 seconds, as we hold the ultimate piece of technology in our hands - whether it is the latest smartphone, tablet, laptop - the

question we need to be asking ourselves is ‘what are we doing to protect ourselves?’, because the very devices meant to give us access to the world, are the ones that the cybercriminals are using to attack us. Most importantly, what are we doing to protect our children when we put these same devices into their hands.

From the stats I have mentioned, it is obvious that Cybersecurity is a national imperative for ALL countries. The South African government established a National Cybersecurity Policy Framework (NCPF) in 2012. The NCPF creates institutional capacity for South Africa to address Cybersecurity from a national defence, intelligence, policing and civil society perspective.

With the backdrop of the NCPF, the then Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services, now the Department of Communications & Digital Technologies, established the Cybersecurity Hub in 2015, and in 2018, the Cybersecurity Awareness Portal was completed, creating a platform for citizens to report cyber incidents and assist victims of cybercrime, amongst others.

Part of the Cybersecurity Hub’s mandate is to implement a national Cybersecurity Awareness program. Cybersecurity Awareness is a matter of behavioural change, making it a cultural challenge. It demands a coordinated, holistic approach, as Cybersecurity Awareness initiatives MUST reach ALL residents of a country. In this context, the role of the private sector and academia must never be underestimated. And, this is what has brought us all together today.

I am extremely excited and very proud to endorse and launch the Cybersecurity Toolkit for Learners, an initiative that has seen The Cybersecurity Hub work closely

with the Cyber Awareness Project within the School of Computing at UNISA. UNISA, in turn is supported by the British High Commission's Digital Prosperity Fund, for the development of a series of Cybersecurity Awareness artefacts and collateral for school learners, teachers and parents.

These artefacts include workbooks, games, videos and posters, all of which are being translated initially into six languages, English, Afrikaans, Venda, Xhosa, Sotho and Zulu.

You can imagine that in the world of cybersecurity, school learners are our biggest concern, as their increasing interaction, added to limited knowledge of the online world, and being generally oblivious to the risks and responsibilities of digital citizenship, makes them an easy target. I believe that our biggest responsibility is to protect our children first and foremost, while also teaching them of the risks and threats they face.

It is easy to understand now why I am so excited about this initiative.

It will provide the guidance and practical knowledge for school learners, who are learning how to interact with the digital world, creating future adults who will have good digital citizenship in their DNA.

The Department of Communications and Digital Technologies would like to encourage learners, teachers and parents to use this toolkit, in order to equip themselves with cybersecurity awareness knowledge, hopefully creating behavioural change.

Nothing would make me happier than to see this toolkit being used in all of our South African schools, whether urban or rural, private or public. All children at some point will engage with cyberspace, so let's give them the tools to do so.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all partners who have worked tirelessly to ensure that this toolkit and launch is a success. A special mention goes to the Steering Committee, made up of representatives from DTPS, UNISA and the British High Commission, all of whom were responsible for the launch, the development of the toolkit, the digital artefacts, and the translation thereof to 6 national languages.

The pandemic has revealed the opportunists and criminals amongst us more than ever before, but it is reassuring to know that there are heroes who walk amongst us, who are taking on these opportunists and criminals.

Today, we have gathered here, to close one more gap in the safety and the development of South Africa's children.

I thank you.