

European business community is under constant IT attack

Many companies throughout Europe are not taking IT security seriously, a conference in Barcelona has been told.

Many do not have an Information Security Policy in place, which is leaving them wide open to possible attack and a variety of threats.

More than 150 delegates from BKR International, a worldwide association of accountancy practices, who commissioned UK firm MWR InfoSecurity to carry out a global survey, were told that there is increasing organised criminal activity in Europe to which they need to pay serious attention, not only for themselves, but their clients.

Ian Shaw, Managing Director of MWR InfoSecurity, said that some 100 companies had been polled in Europe. He added: "More than 50% of companies surveyed admitted that in the last year they had been subject to a malicious or accidental virus, worm or malware attack. This goes to prove that the European business community is under constant attack."

The survey indicated that a quarter of firms expected an attack in the next 12 months, and 78% said they felt they would be able to deal with any incursion.

Shaw said that the threat level was changing all the time and that most "attacks" were of a general nature from worms, accidental virus or malware incursions. Ten percent of firms surveyed said they had received targeted attacks, designed to bring their systems down.

He added: "The survey has revealed that while many companies are

aware threats exist, they need to do more to safeguard their interests. One way to do this is to ensure they have a robust security policy and plan in place which can swing into action when an attack is made”.

Shaw said targeted attacks were on the increase. One good example of this was the recent attack on the Sony Playstation network, compromising the personal information of millions of clients.

He added: “Organisations dealing with client personal information need to review their security constantly because the likelihood of a targeted attack is growing. Firms can be targeted in a variety of ways: by disaffected employees, organised groups and criminal gangs. The good news is that most of the companies surveyed felt that information security was a significant priority.”

“Protection of client data is one of the biggest motivators for respondents to the survey. However, many organisations have identified that their clients require adequate reassurance that their data will be safe and therefore see good data protection as a key for business development.”

Despite the difficult economic times, over 30% of the respondents to the survey stated their budget for information security had increased, with only 4% stating there had been a decrease.

Chairman of BKR International’s Europe, Middle East and Africa region, Peter Janssen said: “The survey which has involved a variety of companies across Europe shows the great risk that organisations face by not putting in place the right security procedures”.

He added: “We commissioned the survey because we wanted to highlight the current risks so that our members, their clients and organisations across Europe

are aware of the dangers that they face”.

Daniel Faura whose firm, Faura-Casas, hosted the conference in Barcelona said:
“Based on our experiences over the last few years, it is absolutely essential to adopt secure IT policies across Europe. Businesses must do all they can to avoid improper access and unauthorised use, especially as Europe is about to introduce new regulations about IT services and intelligent mobile utilities”.

ENDS

For Further information please contact:

BKR International:

Telephone: David Barzilay + 44(0) 207 544 8980/ +44(07860 322333

Email: david@barzilay.co.uk

BKR EMEA:

Peter Janssen (Chairman)

Telephone: + 31 47 537 5500/ +31 65 119 1738

Email: pchjjanssen@gibogroep.nl

Stephen Hamlet (Executive Director)

Telephone: + 44 207 544 4840

Email: stephen.hamlet@bkremea.com

Faura-Casas: Daniel Faura:

Telephone: + 34 902 28 28 30/ + 34 649432485

Email: danielfaura@faura-casas.com

MWR InfoSecurity:

Ian Shaw/Alex Fidgen

+44(0) 1256 300920

Email: ian.shaw@mwrinfosecurity.com

Email: Alex.fidgen@mwrinfosecurity.com

NB to Editors:

BKR and MWR InfoSecurity will release their findings for Asia Pacific within the next month and will put together their global findings in November.

Ranked by the International Accounting Bulletin in the top 10 global associations, BKR International represents the combined strength of more than 135 leading-edge accounting and business advisory firms in more than 300 locations throughout the world.