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Call to set up cyber crime complaint departments

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The two-day international conference of Interpol concluded on Monday in Dubai, with participants calling for an establishment of departments to receive public complaints of electronic crimes.

The participants also stressed the need for increased research on cyber crimes, their economic repercussions, how to confront such crimes, and more training courses for officials to tackle this menace.

Participants urged officials to allocate appropriate budget to install latest technologies to detect forensic evidence.

They wanted mobile phone incidents to be included under the cyber crime category. More public awareness is needed, they urged, apart from a legislation to tackle such crimes.

Training becomes mandatory for officials as most cyber crimes involve English language, which not all are comfortable with in the region.

Meanwhile, participants praised the proposal to establish special courts - UAE e-crime courts - and the training of judges and prosecutors to address criminal evidence.

This is commendable, especially since there has been an increase of local electronic crimes pending before courts. Research indicates 80 per cent of cases pending include digital evidence.

Andrew Jones, Head of Information Security Programmes, University of Khalifa, said: "The UAE is one among the targetted countries globally at the risk of computer virus infection. Saudi Arabia comes in after the UAE."

According to the statistics, electronic fraud using credit cards in the US was about \$54 million in 2009, and has increased by 20 per cent this year. He added, in the future more crime will be using GPS-enabled mobile phones. Jones expressed fear at the lack of adequate protection of information transferred between computers and satellites.

Meanwhile, Dr Ibrahim Musa Ba Gaily, Laboratory Director for forensic cybercrime, Zayed University, said: "There is a difference between cyber crime committed by terrorists, which call for constant military intervention, and cyber crime committed against common man, businesses and property.

Ba Gaily said, any electronic crime will have a human element behind it. Similarly, there is a marked increase in the number of credit card crimes and ID card frauds. An international survey reveals 25 per cent of e-mails involving bank account frauds.

Fraudulent e-mail and SMS messages people receive are also the rise. But only 19 per cent of them report to the relevant departments. And 70 per cent of respondents are unaware of technology (SSL).

The survey show 25 per cent own a Bluetooth mobile phone at all times, and 82 per cent of them do not use have any protection against virus. The conference concluded after adopting the long-term strategy to include electronic methods to combat cyber crime in the region. They also stressed the importance exchange of information and research findings among Interpol offices in the region.

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