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Indicators point to rise in cyber offences in the UAE

Number of electronic crimes in court 'increasing exponentially'.

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Many organisations vulnerable to cyber crime were reluctant to share information because their reputation is on the line. Picture is for illustrative purposes only.

Image Credit: Supplied

Abu Dhabi: Cyber crimes are on the rise within the UAE as they are around the world, an expert has said.

Despite the fact that the rate of crime committed via the internet was extremely difficult to measure, certain indicators showed that cyber crime was on the rise, a police researcher said on Monday.

Speaking in Monday's press conference, Dr Ebrahim Bagilli, Assistant Professor and Director of the Advanced Cyber Forensics Research at Zayed University, said: "With regards to the quantification of cyber crimes that are happening here, if you look at the number of cases that are being referred to court that relate to some sort of cyber crime or digital evidence, they are exponentially increasing."

"That's the only measure that we can take at this point," Bagilli explained.

"It is important to say, however, that this is not a problem of the UAE or the Middle East alone, it's a problem everywhere."

Many obstacles stood in the way of being able to estimate the exact extent of these

crimes, he said.

Many organisations vulnerable to cyber crime were reluctant to share such information, which made it more difficult to get exact numbers. "One of the major issues we have, for example with the banking industry, is that they are unwilling to tell you if they had cyber crimes or not, because their reputation is on the line," Bagilli said.

"They would rather spend money to cover up traces of those crimes," he added.

Major Omar Al Tunaiji, Head of Cyber Crime Branch at Abu Dhabi Police, said cyber crime could be divided into four main categories. These included electronic fraud involving bank accounts or credit cards, blackmail, information security, and call security.

He said the exact number of incidents of cyber crime for 2010 in Abu Dhabi would be released during the second International Institute for Computer Sciences, Social Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering's conference on digital forensics and cyber crime.

Have you noticed a rise in cyber crimes? Have you ever been a victim of such a crime?