

NORTHERN ICT4D SERIES HELD AT THE INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUDIES - TAMALE

THEME: CYBER CRIME AND THE NORTHERN YOUTH

A Systems Administrator of the Tamale branch of the Zenith Bank, Mr. Elias Mane has disclosed that the establishment of industry partnerships between various stakeholders such as café operators, ISPs and the law enforcement agencies coupled with detailed acceptable organizational policies, a firewall strategy, the use of Spyware Prevention Programs and some Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) could prevent cyber crime.

Mr. Mane was speaking at one of the editions of the Northern ICT4 Series held at the Institute for Local government Studies on the theme the Northern Youth and Cyber Crime.

He mentioned that Cyber crime, also called computer crime, hi-tech crime or electronic crime, deals with the use of a computer as an instrument to further illegal ends, such as committing fraud, trafficking in child pornography and intellectual property, stealing identities, or violating privacy. He mentioned that Cyber crime, especially through the Internet has grown in importance as the computer has become central to commerce, entertainment, and government.

On the forms of Cyber crime, he mentioned hacking, denial of service attack, virus dissemination, software piracy, pornography, IRC (internet relay chat) crime, credit card fraud, net extortion, phishing, spoofing, cyber stalking, defamation, and salami attack.

On how to detect cyber crime, Mr. Mane mentioned that the use of Intrusion Detection System (IDS), a software and/or hardware which is designed to detect unwanted attempts at accessing, manipulating, and/or disabling of computer systems, mainly through a network, such as the Internet. He cautioned that an anti virus does not detect such crimes. He however mentioned that one of the most known and trusted system is **Snort**.

Snort (www.snort.org) he mentioned is a robust open source tool which exist for monitoring network attacks. Its development started in 1998, and through years, it has evolved into a mature software (de facto standard) and even better than many commercial Intrusion Detection System. Snort, he mentioned monitors network traffic to detect unusual behavior based on rules established by the administrator such as unauthorized applications, viruses and intrusions.

On the advantages of Snort, he mentioned that it allows monitoring of network traffic, gives room for a flexible rules set by administrator and above all it is Open source. He nonetheless cautioned that it can create extensive logs and that the effectiveness depends on the configuration.

On the way forward in fighting cyber crime, he stated that we need to have a comprehensive approach such as the adoption of strong legislation against cyber crime, the development of technical measures, the establishment of industry partnership, education of consumer and industry players about anti-crime measures and an International cooperation to allow global coordination approach to the problem of internet fraud/cyber crime.

Mr. Elias Mane concluded by saying that Ghana must adopt cyber legislation and this must be responsive and adapt to emerging technological developments.

Imam Fuseini Sumaila, who spoke from the religious angle of the topic mentioned that Allah (God) created the universe on the basis of love and truth and has demanded that people should build up their lives and give place to truth in their talks and dealings. He mentioned that truth leads to decency and righteousness.

Imam Sumaila mentioned that in Tamale, young people communicating through the Internet are engaged in trickery and deception and duping unsuspecting victims. These, he said are falsehoods which have layers and layers of darkness and do not only involve

the concealments of truth but also try to prove that the falsehood is truth. He mentioned that cyber crime is like cheating in trade when some traders make false statements while showing their commodities and stating their prices and that trickery and deception such as exposing good products on top and concealing bad ones as in the case of the “sakawa boys” is haram and highly un-Islamic.

Imam Sumaila concluded by hoping and praying that GINKS and its partners will work through forums like the Northern ICT4D Series to reduce cyber crime not only in Northern Ghana but in the country as a whole.

Participants at the forum were of the view that cyber crime is fast penetrating into the fabric of Ghana because of the glorification of wealth, parental neglect and greed.