

National Economies Threatened by Cybercrime

Submitted by: BondPR UK

Monday, 9 June 2008

AVG research supports EU data, need for collaboration to secure online activities; 22% of EU citizens report experiencing some form of cybercrime

Newark, UK, 9th June, 2008 - The European Network Information Security Agency (ENISA) held a press conference at the end of May in which they warned that increased cybercriminal activity threatens the economic interests of the European Union. While the agency noted during the conference that it was difficult to quantify the scope of the problem, the data made available underlines the seriousness of the threat: as many as six million computers in the European Union are infected by, and connected to, botnets, and spam is costing businesses 65 billion Euros.

AVG Technologies, a leading developer of Internet security software for consumers and SMEs, also this week released the results of its own research study, conducted in March 2008 through market research company Ipsos, into the effects of cybercrime on European Union citizens.

Of the 7000 PC users surveyed, 22% had experienced some form of cybercrime; Italians fared worst with 32% of users impacted, closely followed by the UK with 31%.

These results can be linked to two key behavioural trends:

- Very high use of the Internet for increasingly sensitive transactions:

- 72% of users shop online
- 69% of users bank online
- 55% of users pay bills online

Sweden (84%) and Germany (78%) are the leading users of online banking:

- Low levels of protection and low awareness by home PC users of how to prevent cybercrime:
 - 18% of users surveyed had no anti-virus protection on their computers
 - 38% of users claim there is not enough information about cybercrime and how to prevent it.

The low availability of information appears to stimulate the fear factor. More Europeans believe they are likely to experience cybercrime (34%) than burglary (22%), assault (19%) or robbery (25%). Almost half of all Germans believe they are likely to be a victim of cybercrime (47%); no other crime accounted for more than 20%.

"It's clear from both the ENISA report and our own research data that we all still have a considerable amount of work to do to protect computer users against cybercrime," says AVG Technologies CEO JR Smith. "In the space of a few years, the nature of the threat has changed from a sport to professional criminal activity. The challenge for us now is to deliver security with a light touch that does not stifle innovation.

“With the world flattening and borders disappearing online, it becomes critical for businesses and home users to know that they can safely conduct transactions online. We support ENISA's call to action and urge the industry to collaborate to make the Internet a safe place to do business globally. Just as environmental policies are only truly effective when people and organisations get together, securing the web, by its very nature, should be a collaborative undertaking. That's why AVG's threat research incorporates user input as a core component, fostering an environment in which users cooperate with researchers to ensure the protection of all.”

AVG Technologies offers both free and commercial products to help home users and SMEs proactively protect their digital assets against unauthorized access or abuse. Home users can choose AVG Anti-Virus or AVG Internet Security, while business users can select networked versions of the Anti-Virus and Internet Security products as well as file- and email-server based Anti-Virus. AVG Free offers basic anti-virus, anti-spyware, and safe-searching protection for individual users. All products offer unobtrusive high-performance protection and ease of use, and are backed by global research laboratories providing frequent updates to ensure continuous protection.

About ENISA

ENISA, the European Network Information Security Agency, was set up by the EU to work with member states to study info security threats to the state's digital infrastructures. ENISA has been working with member states to set up CERTs, Computer Emergency Response Teams, in various EU member countries: in 2005, there were 8 government CERTs, there are now 14, and ten more are coming online in the next few years. In 2007, the agency launched a feasibility study to explore the creation of an early warning system to notify SMEs and consumers about emerging security threats, such as virus outbreaks. More information at www.enisa.europa.eu.

About AVG Technologies

Founded in 1991 and headquartered in the Czech Republic, AVG is a leading international developer of Internet threat protection solutions for consumers, SMBs and small enterprises. AVG protects more than 70million computer users around the world. The company has regional offices in North America and the United Kingdom, and employs some of the world's leading experts in Internet security, specifically in the areas of threat research, analysis and detection. AVG's award-winning products are distributed globally through resellers and over the Internet as well as via third parties through Software Developer's Kits (SDK). More information at www.avg.com.

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