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Editorial

International Organizations Rally to Combat Cybercrime

Concerns over threats to computers and information systems rose to the level of the United National General Assembly resolution adopted in 2001 on Combating the Criminal Misuse of Information Technologies. This called on member countries to become aware and prepare necessary legal and administrative procedures to prevent and prosecute cybercrime. This initiative was followed a few months later by the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, a legally binding agreement signed by more than 40 countries. The OECD has been concerned the computer security for several years, most recently adopting Guidelines for the Security of Information Systems and Networks in July 2002. It called on member governments to "establish a heightened priority for security planning and management", and also is intended to "promote a culture of security among all participants as a means of protecting information systems and networks".

The focus more recently turned to adoption and implementation of legal instruments to combat cybercrime. This has been a major concern of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation which has endorsed a three-part cybercrime program (1) enactment of comprehensive national laws relating to cybersecurity and cybercrime that are consistent with international legal instruments; (2) identification of national law enforcement units and international high-technology assistance points; and (3) establishment of institutions that exchange threat and vulnerability assessments, such as Computer Emergency Response Teams. More specifically, APEC proposed creation of specific offenses in cybercrime legislation, offenses in electronic commerce and transaction laws, and amend existing fraud legislation to include computer fraud.

The APECTEL Working Group recently circulated a cybercrime legislation survey asking member economies to report on action that may have been taken against 30 types of offenses as well as the status of implementation. Examining even more carefully the status of cybercrime legal initiatives, the American Bar Association has published a 200-page International Guide to Combating Cybercrime. It is addressed to "glaring gaps in combating cybercrime to date". This issue of I-Ways focuses on these developments that, indeed, deserve high priority by government, business as well as individual Internet users.

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