

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



GovCERT.HK
www.govcert.gov.hk



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

1.1 Summary of Major Activities

The Government Computer Emergency Response Team Hong Kong (GovCERT.HK) continued to collaborate with different stakeholders, pressing ahead with various activities to strengthen the cyber security measures and awareness of the community.

1.2 Achievements and Milestones

Building Cyber Security Capabilities and Resilience

We co-organised the Inter-Departmental Cyber Security Drill with the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) to enhance capabilities and resilience of government bureaux/departments (B/Ds) in tackling the evolving cyber security threats. Furthermore, we proactively and adaptively reviewed the Government Information Security Related Regulations, Policies and Guidelines with a view to strengthening the cyber security governance and safeguarding national security.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

Raising Awareness and Knowledge

We held the “Build a Secure Cyberspace Promotional Campaign 2023” with Hong Kong Computer Emergency Response Team Coordination Centre (HKCERT) and HKPF, to raise the public awareness of digital identity protection. We also co-organised the Cybersecurity Symposium 2023 with the Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited (HKIRC), uniting the industry to address the cyber security challenge together.

Fostering Cross-boundary Collaboration

We actively engaged in training activities and drill exercises, and closely worked with global partners to exchange technical views and to cooperate in incident response and coordination. Invited by CNCERT/CC, we joined World Internet Conference (WIC) as a non-profit institution member to expand our presence and to share experience with leading international organisations for addressing common global cyber security challenges.

ABOUT GovCERT.HK

2.1 Introduction

GovCERT.HK is a governmental CERT responsible for coordinating incident responses for over 80 departmental Information Security Incident Response Teams (ISIRTs) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (“the Government”).

GovCERT.HK works closely with HKCERT, local industries and critical Internet infrastructure stakeholders on cyber threat intelligence sharing, capability development, public education and continuous promotion on cyber security. GovCERT.HK also actively collaborates with other governmental and regional CERTs, and international organisations in sharing cyber threat intelligence and incident information; participating in training events, workshops, forums and drills; and organising activities for public awareness promotion and capability development, with a view to enhancing information and cyber security in the region.

2.2 Establishment

GovCERT.HK was established on 1 April 2015 through the consolidation of internal IT security teams within the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) of the Government.

2.3 Resources

GovCERT.HK is an establishment under OGCIO and funded by the Government.

2.4 Mission and Constituency

Being the governmental CERT, GovCERT.HK centrally manages incident responses within the Government and develops CERT-related services to assist government departments in understanding the associated risks of information and cyber security, implementing appropriate security measures, monitoring potential threats and responding to security events with a view to ensuring that the government's information infrastructure is well protected.

ACTIVITIES AND OPERATIONS

3.1 Security News Bulletins

GovCERT.HK published the following security bulletins to raise the awareness among government users and the general public:

- “Security Vulnerabilities and Patches” to registered subscribers through emails on every working day; and
- “Security Blogs” posted to the GovCERT.HK website as public information.

(www.govcert.gov.hk/en/securityblogs.html)

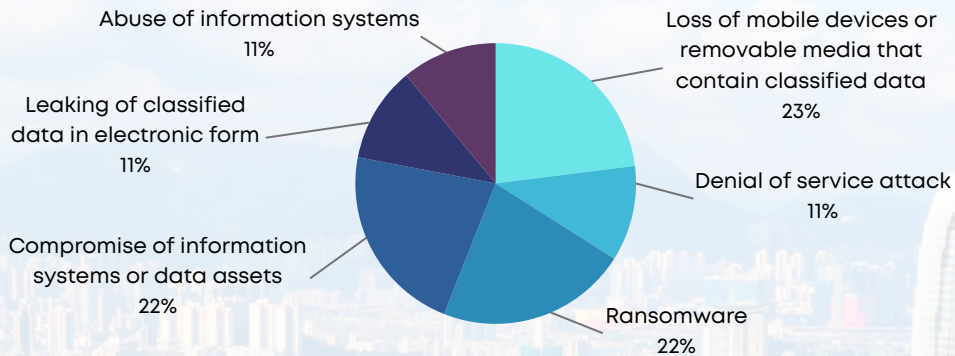
3.2 Alerts and Advisories

In 2023, GovCERT.HK issued over 245 security alerts on known security vulnerabilities reported in common products. For those vulnerabilities with higher severity level, we proactively requested government departments to take prompt and appropriate preventive measures against potential information security risks.

3.3 Incident Handling Reports

GovCERT.HK handled 9 reported incidents related to government installations, with the incident types shown below:

DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTED INCIDENTS IN 2023



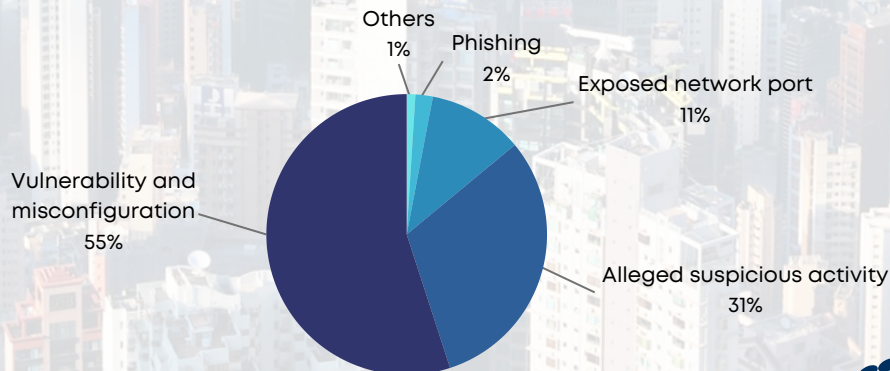
Relevant statistics on information security incidents in the Government are available on the Government's Public Sector Information Portal for public access.

www.data.gov.hk/en-data/dataset/hk-ogcio-sec_div_01-information-security-incident

3.4 Abuse Statistics

GovCERT.HK assisted government departments to take effective and prompt measures to prevent and reduce the risks and impacts of cyber attacks on their information systems, with the types of security issues shown below:

DISTRIBUTION OF ISSUES HANDLED IN 2023



3.5 Publications and Mass Media

To actively reach out to the public, we continued to share tips and best practices against cyber threats through multiple channels.

- We partnered with Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) to broadcast radio episodes “e-World Smart Tips” every week, covering a wide range of topics such as phishing attacks, online shopping, devices disposal, smart travelling and safe use of social media and instant messaging, in a lively and interesting way.

(www.cybersecurity.hk/en/media.php#Radio)

- We published practical guidelines and infographics with themes such as artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot challenges & best practices, cyber safe travel and guide on using instant messaging to educate the public to protect themselves against cyber attacks.

(www.cybersecurity.hk/en/resources.php)



- We organised “Protect Your Online Identity” Speech Contest. Many creative videos with witty speeches reminding the public to safeguard their digital identities and protect personal information were received.



Winning Entries



- We published a series of posts on the OGCIIO Facebook page, with updates and tips on the latest cyber security topics such as phishing, Web 3.0, artificial intelligence and incident response, to enhance communications with the public. (www.facebook.com/OGCIIOHK)

3.6 GovCERT.HK Technology Centre

We continued to operate the GovCERT.HK Technology Centre, which provided relevant facilities and equipment to develop the capability of government staff to tackle evolving cyber threats, identify and remediate from potential security weaknesses in a controlled environment.

EVENTS ORGANISED/ HOSTED

4.1 Training

In 2023, we organised various seminars, webinars and training featuring the latest IT security technologies and solutions, as well as the latest cyber security threats and how to deal with them. Some 3 240 government staff participated in the events with topics on security risk management, Web 3.0, AI, quantum computing, ransomware protections and application security testing. A Catalogue of IT Security Solutions (CoSS) is also maintained to facilitate B/Ds to reference and explore the potential of various IT security solutions.

4.2 Drills and Exercises

Inter-departmental Cyber Security Drill

GovCERT.HK joined hands with the CSTCB of HKPF to organise the annual inter-departmental cyber security drills to strengthen the preparedness and the overall incident response capability of B/Ds to cyber attacks. In 2023, it was held in a hybrid online-offline format featuring a practical exercise system, with participation of 232 information technology officers from 68 B/Ds.

Cyber Health Check Exercise

A series of technical assessments was carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of existing security controls and identify potential weaknesses in government Internet-facing systems and mobile applications, with a view to building a stronger defence.

4.3 Conferences and Seminars

Build a Secure Cyberspace Promotional Campaign

Various promotional activities under the theme “Protect Your Online Identity” were organised for businesses, organisations, schools and the public to raise their cyber security awareness and strengthen their cyber security postures. Two seminars were organised in May and September 2023 under the campaign.



School visits and security talks for non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

To promote cyber security awareness and cyber etiquette, we organised a total of 44 visits to primary and secondary schools, tertiary institutions, and NGOs to deliver information security talks to students, teachers, parents, service recipients and staff of NGOs.

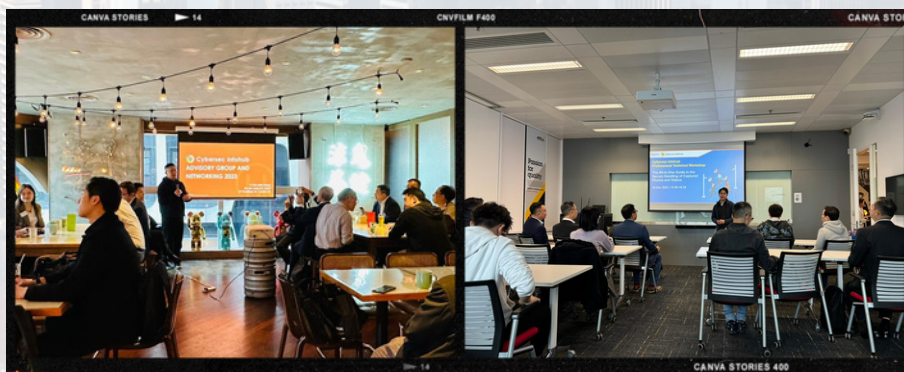
InfoSec Tours with RTHK Radio 2

GovCERT.HK continued to partner with the RTHK to conduct three InfoSec Tours with topics of “Protect Your Online Identity”, “Protect Personal Information and Privacy” and “Beware of Phishing Attacks”, which delivered information security message in a relaxing way and equipped the public to be a smart Internet user. A short video clip with the theme of fact-checking has also been produced to raise awareness about the importance of verifying information before sharing it.



Cybersec Infohub engagement activities

To promote cyber security information sharing among public and private organisations, various activities such as sector-specific meeting and networking, technical professional workshops and seminars were arranged under the Cybersec Infohub partnership programme with affirmative feedback.



Cybersecurity Symposium 2023

The event aimed to bring together quangos, enterprises and other local organisations to explore industry collaboration in addressing cyber security challenges in the digital era. Over 10 industry experts and business leaders from the Mainland of China and Hong Kong, together with over 450 industry professionals representing about 200 public and private organisations, exchanged views on different topics including protection of critical data and the latest technologies and trends in cyber defence matters. The event also featured a showcase of cyber security solutions, allowing participants to gain insights and to engage with industry experts regarding the latest cyber security technologies and solutions.



LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

5.1 Local Collaboration

Promoting Cyber Security Information Sharing and Collaboration

We continued to promote and operate the Cybersec Infohub with HKIRC for establishing closer connections among local information security stakeholders. The programme has attracted over 2 000 organisations and more than 3 100 representatives from various local sectors as of the end of 2023.



Enhancing Overall Cyber Security Resilience

We continued to support our working partners to organise various programmes and campaigns to educate the public to cope with the latest cyber attacks and to acquire fundamental knowledge with a view to nurturing cyber security talents in a long run. GovCERT.HK supported the following events and initiatives:

- CTF Challenge 2023 and Phishing Public Awareness Campaign by HKCERT
- Free online training resources at “Cybersec Training Hub” and “Cyber Youth Programme 2023”, including certified training courses, game-aided learning platform and competitions, by HKIRC

5.2 International Collaboration

To foster closer collaboration with international security experts for sharing experience in information security and for strengthening the knowledge base of emerging cyber threats, vulnerabilities and mitigation solutions, GovCERT.HK strived to learn from the CERT community on the global cyber security trends from different facets, including international standards development, global information security and data privacy policies, cyber crime initiatives and technological researches.

GovCERT.HK participated in the following events in 2023:

- China Cybersecurity Week 2023
- APCERT Annual General Meeting and Conference
- APCERT Drill with the theme of “Digital Supply Chain Redemption”
- APCERT on-line training sessions
- CNCERT/CC Conference 2023
- NatCSIRT Meeting 2023 and 35th FIRST Annual Conference

FUTURE PLANS

It is GovCERT.HK's ongoing effort to strengthen the cyber security resilience and promote security awareness through various activities:

- Enhance the intelligence gathering and sharing mechanism within the government to cope with the emerging threats;
- Bolster the connections with local, regional and international cyber security partners to foster efficient communications on incident management; and
- Continue to work closely with our partners to organise various programmes for nurturing talents and enhancing awareness and resilience within the government departments and the public.

CONCLUSION

To maintain cyber security readiness, response capabilities and resilience of the public and organisations, GovCERT.HK will continue to raise cyber security awareness in the community by proactively working with B/Ds, various stakeholders in the industry in a holistic approach with a view to strengthening the capability in combating the ever-changing cyber security trends.



cert@govcert.gov.hk



www.govcert.gov.hk

www.cybersechub.hk

www.cybersecurity.hk

www.infosec.gov.hk