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CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS

In a world where almost every aspect of life is intertwined with digital technology, cybersecurity awareness has become essential for both individuals and organizations. Cyber threats continue to become more widespread, targeting personal data, financial information, and even critical infrastructure. The rapid adoption of cloud services has led to further surge in data breaches and security incidents. In view of this, cybersecurity awareness is critical for everyone who uses digital devices to understand the risks associated with digital activities. Awareness programs assists to identify suspicious activities and follow best practices to reduce the likelihood of accidental data leaks or digital attacks.

In today's digital landscape, cybersecurity threats are more sophisticated than ever. Among these threats, social engineering attacks are in limelight today for their ability to exploit human psychology rather than relying solely on technical vulnerabilities. Unlike traditional hacking, which often involves technical skills, social engineering preys on human emotions and behavior, making it a critical concern for both individuals and organizations.

According to cybersecurity reports, social engineering is a leading cause of data breaches. Social engineering scams involves impersonation and deception to gain victims trust. A sense of urgency can prompt individuals to act quickly without questioning the request. Many attacks leverage fear to push victims into compliance, such as threats of account suspension or financial penalties. Common man become victim by clicking untrusted/ misspelt URL's or responding to emails that do not match the supposed sender. Recognizing and understanding these tactics of attacker can significantly reduce being victimized.

Artificial Intelligence provides cyber criminals with powerful tools and can be used to automate attacks, create more convincing phishing campaigns, and produce deepfakes for Social Engineering. Deepfakes make use of artificial intelligence to swap faces, create new identities, mimic voices, or generate entirely fictional content that's increasingly hard to distinguish from the real thing.

Cybersecurity awareness is the foundation of digital safety. Individuals and organizations can safeguard themselves from cyber attacks by understanding potential threats, adopting strong cybersecurity practices and using secure Wi-Fi network. As technology advances, maintaining a vigilant attitude towards cybersecurity will become even more critical in ensuring the safety of personal data, financial assets, and digital privacy. It is important to stay ahead of emerging cyber threats by adopting best practices in digital safety and cultivate a security-first mindset in their day-to-day activities.

Kumar Jayant, IAS
Additional Chief Secretary, Dept of IT & Digital Services, Govt of Tamil Nadu

The paradigm shift in use of online services in day-to-day life, post the Covid pandemic, has been an amazing journey. Digitalization that eluded us in the first two decades of this century was accomplished during the two years of lockdown. As the usage of these platforms increased, the miscreants also started focusing here for identifying unwary users who can be scammed.

It's a wrong notion that one can be secure by procuring and deploying off-the-shelf cyber security solutions. The weakest link in cyber security chain is the common man. Awareness and caution about possible tactics, techniques and procedures of the fraudsters is the key to a secured ecosystem.

October being the Cyber Security Awareness Month, an all-out effort needs to be made to spread the awareness about the problems in day to day cyber security, and their solutions. It is heartening to note that, NIC being the premier ICT partner to the Govt of Tamil Nadu is taking various initiatives in this domain. While complimenting the efforts of NIC, I urge everyone to be informed about the cyber security concerns and take remedial measures to safeguard from cyber threats.


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Visit Of Shri S. Krishnan, IAS, Secretary, MeitY To NIC Chennai

Shri. S. Krishnan, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology visited NIC Tamil Nadu State Centre, Rajaji Bhawan, Chennai and National Knowledge Network (NKN) Point of Presence (PoP), Chennai on Saturday 17th August, 2024. The Secretary was warmly welcomed by the State Informatics Officer and the other Senior Officers.The Secretary held an interactive session with Senior Officers of NIC Tamil Nadu State Centre. A comprehensive presentation was given that showcased the numerous initiatives launched and managed by NIC Tamil Nadu. The presentation gave insights into the NIC's efforts on leveraging technology for enhancement of e-governance, service delivery, citizen engagement, etc.

The various e-Gov projects, such as TamilNilam, health, education, and rural development were covered during the presentation. The Secretary highlighted the importance of integration of various citizen services and emphasized the need for product model with appropriate API integration.

The session concluded with a discussion on the roadmap for future initiatives, integrating new technologies, aiming for greater collaboration between state departments and NIC. Secretary's remarks reflected the government's commitment for digital transformation for improving the quality of citizen-centric services accessible for all citizens. The Secretary appreciated the initiatives by NKN.

3rd Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS 3.0) 2024

The 3rd VOGSS was convened virtually on 17th August, 2024, to deliberate on the Global South's priorities and the solutions that could emerge from partner countries in the developing world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the summit. This one-day event, themed "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future" included a total of 12 sessions.

A session for Information & Technology Ministers themed "DPIs for Development - A Global South Approach" was chaired by Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY during the 3rd VOGSS. Video Conferencing Division, NIC Tamil Nadu coordinated with NIC-HQ and extended technical support during the session.

eTrans'24, a two-day Zonal Workshop

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) and National Informatics Centre (NIC) organized eTrans'24, a two-day zonal workshop on 12th and 13th September 2024 at Pune, Maharashtra. The workshop graced by Shri. Anurag Jain, Secretary, MoRTH, was attended by State Transport Commissioners, delegates from Police, Transport, Health, Shri. Joydeep Shome, DDG & HoG, NIC eTransport Project, Shri. Ankit Dugar, Director (MoRTH), State Informatics Officers from participating states, NIC iRAD/eRAD team and officials from insurance companies,. Latest developments and achievements, utilization of new technology and business processes in eDAR Project were discussed during the brainstorming session to upscale the project to a new level. The Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD) / e-Detailed Accident Report (eDAR) Project aims to establish an accurate and uniform road accident database for facilitating easy forecasting and decision making for reduction of number of road accident in India.

NIC-Tamil Nadu project team members Shri. S. Vidyasankar, Senior Director(IT) and Shri. N, Dhanasekar, Director(IT) gave detailed presentation on new features such as eDAR - eCourt Integration for Road Accident victim claim processing, eDAR - NHA application Integration for Cashless Scheme to the Road Accident victims and eDAR - NHAI Data Lake portal Integration and various Reports and GIS Analysis incorporated in the eDAR system. The informative session on eDAR was followed by an open house session where innovative ideas were exchanged. Valuable feedbacks received from delegates will pave way to further enhance the services of eDAR in due course of time.

MICRO 32 TO MINI CLOUD

National Informatics Centre was established in the year 1976 with the objective to provide technology-driven solutions to Central and State Governments. As the technology partner of the Government, NIC was mandated to design and develop IT systems and provide ICT infrastructure to the Government, besides exploring and advising on use of emerging technologies. NIC started functioning under the Planning Commission of India (now NITI Aayog) in 1980s and spearheaded usage of IT across India. An all-out effort to create computer awareness among Central and State Government departments and train the employees was done under the visionary leadership of Dr. N. Seshagiri, the founder DG of NIC.

Early Decades

NIC witnessed exponential growth during the late 80s and early 90s when offices were setup across the country from National Capital to State Capitals and District Centers. The employee strength also increased from few hundreds to thousands. NICNET became the backbone for the Government departments and District administrations across the country. Simultaneously, eMail culture also started in Government departments resulting in tremendous savings in terms of time and money in delivery of messages.

The introduction of personal computers (PCs) in 1980s started a new era where computers have become affordable to small and big organizations. PCXTs and 286 systems with MS-DOS operating system were provided to NIC Tamil Nadu State Centre (TNSC). Being single user systems, these systems could not serve the government setup where multiple applications were needed by different departments and several activities being carried out concurrently.

Late 80s saw the emergence of multi user operating system - UNIX. Simultaneously, 80386 based PCs and workstations which supported DOS and UNIX were introduced and were widely accepted by NIC and many organizations. The entire acceptance tests (48 hrs continuous burning tests and functionality tests of all supporting devices like monitors, keyboard, floppy disks, tape drive, hard disk and dumb monitors connected using digiboards/computone/intelliboards) and stock entry was done by NIC TNSC and were dispatched to all NIC Centres across the country. This massive exercise was carried out under the able leadership of then State Informatics Officer Shri A. Mohan.

The NICNET Era

The C-200 VSATs installed in all district centers and connected to Master Earth Station at NIC Headquarters, Delhi was a major step in the network communication domain. The entire nation was covered using NICNET and data could be transferred from districts to any other location in a matter of seconds. Radix and X-Talk became the communication media among all offices which slowly started replacing the Telex / Teleprinters in government organizations. Few National wide applications were tried out using this network 30 years back, including dissemination of Election Results by connecting to Doordarshan Kendras across the country. Counting status of each rounds and the final election results were made available to public in matter of hours, compared to few days. MEDLARS was another NICNET based application where the doctors accessed latest research articles across the world from NIC offices. This helped doctors in saving the lives of many citizens by keeping abreast of current happenings in medical world.

Era of Internet

The 1990s saw the growth of the new technology "Internet". Many people did not visualize the impact of internet at that time. NICTNSC had 64 kbps Leased Live connectivity from Videsh Sanchar Nigam limited (VSNL) through BSNL for internet connectivity. In 1997, Tamil Nadu was one of the first states to publish 10th and 12th class examination results on internet, which was well appreciated by the public and queued-up to view the final exam results.

Y2K and After

Internet and web technologies totally changed the world and the CIOs started becoming CEOs. People started accepting citizen services through internet which made their life much easier and less costly with reduced waiting time. Technology started moving from client-server architecture towards centralized servers. Cloud computing became popular slowly and steadily. Organizations felt that the regular high investment on hardware or software installation and maintenance can be off loaded to another organization which can efficiently and effectively do the same. Thus, Cloud computing later on made establishment of Data Centers necessary and in turn provided better uptime, better Return On Investment (ROI), centralized operational cost and maintenance. With advancement in technologies such as AI, Data Science, IoT and Blockchain the citizens are sure to get the benefit of Anytime, Anywhere Government eServices and enjoy a better world tomorrow.

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VILLAGE PANCHAYAT TAX MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR TAMIL NADU

Online Village Panchayat Tax (VPTAX) portal **https://vptax.tnrd.tn.gov.in** is a multi tenancy application developed in Open Source, configured and implemented for Village Panchayats by NIC Tamil Nadu State Centre.

E-taxation Application for Directorate of Town Panchayat (**https://dtp.tn.gov.in**) comprising 490 Town Panchayat has also been implemented by NIC-Tamil Nadu State Centre.

Technology Stack Used

• Completely Free Open-Source Technologies (FOSS).

• Linux-Apache-Postgres DB-PHP (LAPP).

• Ajax, jQuery, JavaScript, HTML5, CSS 3.0,Bootstrap Libraries.

• Wkhtmltopdf, mpdf for multilingual reports .

• Flutter for Mobile Apps.

Hardware and Connectivity

• Desktop machines, Printer, POS Machines are provided for each Village Panchayat.

• Broad Band Connectivity is provided through ISPs.

At present in VPTAX Portal, 1.49 Crore Properties from 3.66 Lakh Streets and 45 Lakh water connections are entered by Village Panchayat Secretaries. User IDs are provided to all 12,525 Village Panchayat Secretaries and Village Panchayat Presidents.

Citizen can pay the following taxes:

• Property tax

• Water Charges

• Professional Tax

• Trade License

• Non-Taxes

• Miscellaneous Receipts

Citizen can register in the portal and attach their single or multiple properties for the payment of various taxes. They can view the Tax demand for various Properties, pay their dues and download the receipts. The Tax demand can be accessed by citizen through their mobile number attached to properties or by giving assessment number.

Salient Features of VPTAX Application

• Bilingual (Tamil / English) Web based online Application with Mobile Friendly Feature (Responsive Web Design)

• Work Flow based Architecture and Tax Formula configurable based on Village Panchayat resolution

• Maintenance of Demand and Receipt Register.

• Panchayat Secretary can generate Professional Tax Demand and collect the tax. Cheques are accepted from companies for professional tax payment

• Application for non-tax related activities viz., Auction, Lease of assets and Renewal

• Miscellaneous receipt Module has features to collect many receipts such as Advertisement Tax, Local body Entertainment Tax, 2C Patta, Cart Stand, ferries, Social Forestry and other receipts

• All Receipts to Citizen are sent by email and SMS and can be printed in Bilingual (Tamil or English) and provision to download old receipts

• Taxes can be paid through any mode using Application installed in POS device

• Citizen can download their payment details anytime as PDF from the portal

• Payment option for multiple properties has been made easy. All the properties in Rural Areas of Tamil Nadu will get listed by entering the registered mobile number and citizen can choose the Year and Property for Payment

• Counter Collection through all modes of payment cash, UPI, Credit and Debit Card options available

• Dashboards, graphical and several monitoring reports for analysis are provided to Village Panchayats, District and State level Officers

• Single Nodal account is created in the Bank for each Village Panchayat where all the taxes collected through the Software are deposited

DASH BOARD VIEW

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