



Network Security Information Exchanges

Issue Background

Industry and Government coordinate through Network Security Information Exchanges (NSIE) to voluntarily share sensitive information on threats to operations, administration, maintenance, and provisioning systems supporting the telecommunications infrastructure. Government NSIE members include departments and agencies that use national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) communications services, represent law enforcement, or have information relating to network security threats and vulnerabilities. The President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC) NSIE representatives include industry subject matter experts engaged in prevention, detection, and/or investigation of communications software penetrations or who have security and investigative responsibilities.

History of NSTAC Actions

In April 1990, the Chairman of the National Security Council's Policy Coordinating Committee—National Security Telecommunications and Information Systems asked the National Communications System (NCS) Manager to identify what actions industry and Government should pursue to protect critical NS/EP telecommunications from the growing “hacker” threat. At the request of the NCS Manager, the NSTAC established the Network Security Task Force, which ultimately recommended the creation of separate, but closely coordinated, NSIEs. In May 1991, the NSIE charters were finalized, and NSTAC companies and Government departments and agencies designated NSIE representatives, chairmen, and vice-chairmen. The NSTAC and Government NSIEs held their first joint meeting in June 1991.

In 2003, NSIE representatives had worked closely with British Telecom to assist with the establishment of an NSIE-like entity in the United Kingdom. NSIE representatives also assisted Industry Canada in establishing a similar entity in Canada in 2005. In July 2009, New Zealand held its first NSIE meeting and Australia is developing an NSIE organization, as well. The NSTAC and Government NSIEs continue to work with these global partners to share information and enhance network security.

Recent NSIE Activities

As of January 2010, the NSIEs had held 111 meetings, including two multilateral meetings with their international partners. The United Kingdom and Canada hosted the multilateral NSIE meetings in 2007 and 2008, respectively. In April 2010, the United States will host the next NSIE international meeting, which will include multilateral information sharing with its international counterparts.

Recently, the NSIEs have built on the success of the multilateral meetings and leveraged their domestic and international partnerships on efforts that have improved the security of the public network. In early 2008, NSIE members established a forum to address the increase in circuit card thefts in the U.S. and abroad. The forum worked closely with industry and Government partners to construct a database of stolen card information that vendors could use to identify illicit material being sold on the market. The group continues to engage major vendors and is working on deploying a web interface for the database.

Periodically, the NSIEs assess the risks to the public network from electronic intrusions. The most recent report, *An Assessment of the Risk to the Cybersecurity of the Public Network*, was completed in August 2009. The NSIEs focused this assessment on how changes in technology and the overall environment have affected the network.

For more information on the NSTAC, visit www.ncs.gov/nstac/nstac.html or call (703) 235-4965.