Ministry of Communications and Information
An Engaged and Connected Singapore

CLOSING ADDRESS BY DR JANIL PUTHUCHEARY AT THE VIRTUAL YOUTH CYBER EXPLORATION PROGRAMME CENTRAL CAPTURE-THE-FLAG COMPETITION AWARD CEREMONY ON 24 JUNE 2022 AT 5PM

Introduction

1.   A very good evening and congratulations for completing the Youth Cyber Exploration Programme Central Capture the Flag Competition. All of you have worked very hard at the YCEP bootcamps held at the various Polytechnics to qualify for this Competition. No matter what the results are, well done to each and every one of you, and congratulations for your hard work.

2.   I hope you enjoyed the CTF competition. I thought I might say a few words about the traits that I think are needed for a fulfilling career in cybersecurity. There are many skills and values to consider, but I will highlight just three:
- Collaboration,
- Tenacity, and
- Fluidity

Cybersecurity requires Collaboration

3.   First, collaboration. Cybersecurity is a team sport. It requires us to work together to collectively defend against cyber-attacks. You experienced this earlier when you worked in teams to solve the CTF challenges – you leverage the diverse, complementary skillsets that your team possessed to tackle the challenges.
However, the importance of collaboration in cybersecurity spans beyond CTFs and the technical work. The ever evolving and complex cyber threat landscape means that we need to combine efforts, share information, and have open discussions outside of just your technical team. This approach will enable us to understand the adversaries that we are facing and develop new ways to defend and protect ourselves. Many of the adversaries now work in teams, and so we have to form better and more effective teams to counter them.

4.   Collaboration shouldn't just stop within cyber teams, it applies to our broader ecosystem as well. This is why the Government engages industry partners to develop initiatives that promote cybersecurity awareness and education to the wider population. In fact, the interactive CyberStart platform that you used for YCEP this year was developed in conjunction with SANS, a cybersecurity training provider. We also engaged the cybersecurity community – like Cyber Youth Singapore, where members provided insightful sharing sessions during the bootcamps. I am heartened by the support, passion and expertise of our various community and industry partners and look forward to more partnerships in the future.

Cybersecurity requires Tenacity

5.   Second, cybersecurity requires tenacity.

6.   Cybersecurity professionals must be tenacious when solving cybersecurity problems. This is reflected in your determination to complete the challenges and capture the flags.

7. Take threat hunting as an example. Cyber threats are evolving, and malicious cyber actors are always developing new techniques and strategies. It is not easy to uncover cyber threats that are lurking in our networks. So, threat hunters need to persevere through the challenging but exciting process of gathering information and evaluating their hypotheses to conduct a successful investigation.

8. I hope that all of you embrace the spirit of tenacity that was demonstrated during YCEP and the CTF competition today. This trait will serve you well throughout your cybersecurity journey and for some reason if you decide not to go into cybersecurity, I hope this is one of the most important things that you learn from your time in cybersecurity that you can take and apply to many other fields as well.

Cybersecurity is a highly fluid and dynamic field

9. Last, Fluidity. Cybersecurity is a highly fluid and dynamic field which requires you to be adaptable. The threat landscape is constantly evolving because new digital technologies are always being developed.

10. New business models can also increase the risk, persuading us to trade our security for convenience. As new devices, business models and technologies are introduced, we get used to them as part of our daily lives. This will only mean more and new cybersecurity challenges. So, constantly upgrading our skills and knowledge is very important to keep up with the threat actors, who are always finding new ways to exploit technologies, penetrate our systems and steal our data.

11. There are also opportunities. For you, as the economy digitalise, as cybersecurity professionals adapt, they have the rare privilege of applying their skills in many different industries. You will find many different job roles and companies for you to choose from.

Conclusion

12. The economy is hungry for cybersecurity skills. The reason for this is that cybersecurity is a foundation for Singapore to digitalise confidently and achieve our goals. As a cybersecurity professional, your work builds and enables trust in Singapore and its digital economy. You will also play an important role in creating a safe digital environment for all of us.

13. As you continue on in your cybersecurity journey, I would like to emphasise that we achieve more as a team. Please stay connected and plugged in to the cybersecurity community. Join your school's Infocomm Club, join the community Discord channels. Participate in cybersecurity events and work together with the friends you make along the way! Connect with Cyber Youth Singapore!

14. Before I announce the winners, I would like to congratulate all of you again for completing the YCEP bootcamps and the YCEP Central CTF competition. I hope that all of you have gained some real-world insights and some future ready cybersecurity skills after going through this experience.

15.   And without further delay, I will now announce the top three winning teams of the YCEP Central CTF 2022.

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