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Politicians, Police Recruited to Talk Up IT Security

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By Bernhard Warner, European Internet Correspondent

LONDON (Reuters) - Politicians, law enforcement and national security advisers have descended on London this w computer security event, covering topics that more reflect surviving global conflict than safeguarding computer net

While many corporate technology events have suffered from the economic slowdown, security conferences arou have been relatively well attended.

"The world's changed," said Martin Smith, chairman of the three-day Compsec conference, a 19-year-old event tha say has experienced renewed interest since the September 11 attacks in the United States.

"The threat a few years ago was completely different. You have governments talking about protecting national infra now, when before you had people talking about protecting a single computer system against hackers," he said.

On Wednesday Brian Michael Jenkins, a security adviser from the Santa Monica, Calif.-based Rand Corporation, Compsec 2002 with a keynote address discussing the likelihood of "full blown cyber-terrorism."

Other topics will include fortifying a computer network against a cyber attack from organized crime or militant group digital forensic tools to stop money laundering at its source, and effective policing practices to fight fraud and extor attempts.

WILL THEY BUY IT?

Such weighty issues may draw headlines, but Smith wonders how it will play with a crucial constituent -- the chief i officers that hold the purse strings and who have been watching the pennies amid a persistent technology downtu

With security vendors like Symantec and a host of IT consultants in attendance, the main question swirling the hall event is sure to be: when will investment in IT security products perk up? "We need to speak to business people in language, which is money. Spend to save, that kind of thing. We will be trying to engage serious debate at the bus said Smith, who is also managing director of UK-based The Security Company International.

CYBERCRIME



Cybercrime is likely to be the other main talking point, with officials from Europol, a Council of Europe minister, anc from top security firms such as Kroll Associates and Rand Corp lining up to speak.

One of the more urgent pleas will come from Phil Swinburne, a specialist policy adviser with Britain's National Hi-T Unit.

Swinburne said many companies still do not report incidents of cybercrime as they fear it could lead to negative pu of customers and send share prices falling.

"If we aren't made aware of their concerns then it could impact where we put our resources," warned Swinburne.

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