

CYBERSKILLS ON COURSE TO Mitigate The Risk Of Attack

Recovering from a ransomware attack can be difficult and expensive for any business and serves to highlight the need to develop proactive and strategic approaches to cyber security. So, how prepared is the local government sector in dealing with such attacks? One solution now offered by Munster Technological University is a customised course in cyber-security awareness and risk mitigation for individual local authorities.



Judging from the number of attacks on local government IT systems around the world, it is become more evident that the local government sector will not escape the firing line. Providing one solution to the problem, Munster Technological University (MTU) is offering a wide range of flexible online customised courses in cyber-security for council staff members.

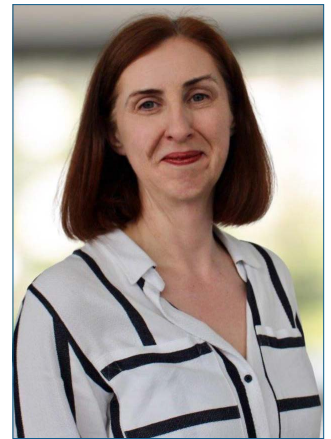
MTU is hosting the CyberSkills programme, in partnership with the University of Limerick and TU Dublin, that offers courses for IT professionals to upskill in the latest cybersecurity techniques. The aim is to address the critical skills shortage of cybersecurity professionals in Ireland and to improve the cyber resilience of Irish citizens through skills, training and research. Cyber Skills is funded under the Higher Education Authority's Human Capital Initiative.

The impact of a successful cyber-attack on a local government includes:

- The financial cost of an attack due to the theft of money or

information which could lead to disruption to trading or loss of business.

- Reputational damage possibly resulting in customers losing trust in you.
- Legal consequences such as fines and regulatory sanctions could be imposed from the Data Protection Commission (DPC). Organisations can now face fines of up to 4% of annual global turnover or €20 million – whichever is greater.



Training must be cyclical, according to Jacqueline Kehoe, Project Manager at Cyber Skills.

City and county councils may have robust systems and protocols in place that identify and repel cyber threats. However, the sophistication of hackers as well as the speed in which they can exploit any data breach will continue to present challenges for all councils.

Pointing to an urgent need to constantly upskill or reskill the IT department within any local authority, Jacqueline Kehoe, Project Manager at Cyber Skills, says that training must be cyclical. "Attacks affect everyone in the organisation, so staff members will need to be refreshed in the latest techniques and there is also a need to raise awareness on how to handle email and other online threats."

The courses have been designed in association with MTU's industry partners for specific job roles. "Currently, we're seeing the biggest gap in secure network operations, software development and systems architects. Course participants can gain Special Purpose Certificates or micro-credentials (smaller academic credits) accredited by the universities through online courses. They can take a single subject micro-credential or study up to four modules for a pathway. It's up to each individual and how they want to achieve the qualifications," Kehoe notes.

For more information on the course programme visit www.cyberskills.ie

 **CYBERSKILLS**
Building Ireland's cyber security skills