Over 40 women from 10 African countries met in Nairobi, Kenya, between October 10 - 12 for second edition of the UNODC African Women in Cyber Summit. This edition of the summit aimed to bring together, once again, African women working in different fields in cyber on the continent to exchange and network within the community. As a follow-up of last year’s edition of the summit held in Bangkok, Thailand, participants at the summit reviewed the accomplishments of AWIC as a successful networking group. It measured, at an individual level, the impact the monthly activities of the group have had on the professional
development of its members. With a view to the future, and to ensure a continuation of the networking group's activities, the Summit served as an initial step towards transferring the day-to-day planning and management of the group to its members.

Watch the highlight video of the 2023 AWIC summit in Kenya.

WHAT'S YOUR CYBER HYGIENE? - SECURITY AWARENESS
By Gbemisola Esho - Cloud computing and data journalist (Nigeria)

Knowing to care about your online security is the first step in cybersecurity and digital safety. Your safety is basically in your hands, if you consider security best practices and put them in place, it becomes more difficult for threat actors to succeed because you have put processes in place rendering their attacks less effective. Cyber hygiene is the way to achieve this and follow security best practices.

The Password
A foot in the door is all one needs to get into a house, and the same applies to threat actors. When proper password hygiene is not observed, it is easier for cybercriminals to operate and it also affects the threat surface.

Read the complete article here.
Attending the second Women in Cyber Summit marked a pivotal moment in my professional journey. From the exhilaration of being selected to the anticipation of boarding the plane, my heart raced with excitement. As a digital forensic examiner with just three years of experience, I wholeheartedly love what I do. My inquisitive mind had found the perfect outlet in my job, validating the countless hours spent watching mystery movies and reading detective novels.

Arriving at the summit, my expectations soared, and they were not only met but exceeded. In my daily workspace, women often face the challenge of being overlooked, their abilities underestimated. However, at the summit, I was not only encouraged but inspired, I had the privilege of joining a remarkable group of cyber divas, who had carved out successful careers in the complex and exhilarating field of cybercrime.

Before attending the summit, I had envisaged a room filled with women with such expertise was only found in the Western world, but what I discovered was a room full African women individuals who exuded energy, wisdom, and passion for the ever-evolving cyberspace. The exchange of knowledge and insights transcended national boundaries and spanned a diverse spectrum of cyber interests. I reveled in the experience.

For the first time, I felt that I was not alone in the challenges I faced, the hurdles of being undermined and underestimated. I found not only mentors but also big sisters who were just a call away and always ready to guide and assist whenever needed.

The summit was a refreshing breath of inspiration. It motivated me to push my boundaries and strive for greater heights. It planted a seed in my heart and mind, and I eagerly await the day it blooms, as I embark on this journey alongside the incredible women who make up the global community of cybersecurity experts. Together, we prove that in this dynamic and vital field, women are not alone but are shaping the future.

**CYBERGIRLS FELLOWSHIP OFFERS A PATH FOR AFRICAN WOMEN AGED 18 - 25 IN CYBERSECURITY**

CyberGirls Fellowship, a transformative initiative aimed at fostering female cybersecurity professionals in Africa, is now accepting applications for its comprehensive one-year training program. Read more about it here. To sign-up for the CyberGirls Fellowship, apply here.
In the riveting landscape of cybersecurity, women continue to carve their paths, leaving indelible marks on this dynamic terrain. However, amid the thrilling complexities and demanding nature of this field, achieving equilibrium between professional prowess and personal fulfillment often becomes an intricate juggling act.

The evolving nature of cybersecurity demands unwavering commitment and agility, blurring the boundaries between work and personal life. For women embracing this realm, the quest for balance seems both essential and elusive, akin to a symphony seeking perfect harmony.

The pursuit of excellence in cybersecurity, irrespective of gender, necessitates dedication and resilience. Yet, for women, this pursuit often intertwines with societal expectations and responsibilities beyond the professional space. Juggling complex cyber defense strategies while nurturing personal lives, exemplifies a multifaceted challenge.

The demand for round-the-clock vigilance in safeguarding digital systems presents a unique conundrum for women in cybersecurity. Striking a balance between the demands of identifying and mitigating digital threats and nurturing familial or personal commitments requires a delicate blend of skill, determination, and, importantly, support.

Employers and the industry at large play pivotal roles in fostering an environment conducive to work-life balance. Initiatives that prioritize flexible work arrangements, remote work options, and support networks tailored to the unique needs of women in cybersecurity are paramount. Acknowledging and accommodating the diversity of responsibilities that women often shoulder beyond the workplace is integral to cultivating an inclusive and supportive professional ecosystem.

Moreover, fostering a culture that values output over mere presence and encourages a healthy integration of personal and professional aspects can significantly alleviate the burden on women striving for equilibrium. Embracing a culture of understanding that strives for results while respecting personal boundaries, fortifies the bridge between work and personal life.

Yet, the responsibility does not rest solely on employers and industry structures. Women in cybersecurity must also embark on a journey of self-advocacy and empowerment. Prioritizing self-care, setting boundaries, and honing time-management skills are vital tools in the arsenal for achieving balance.
QUESTIONING OUR DIRECT IMPACT ON SOCIETY IN FIGHTING CYBERCRIME
By Margaret Ndungu - Senior Cybersecurity consultant (Kenya)

In October 2023, UNODC hosted the African Women in Cyber Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, bringing together some of the leading figures in the fight against cybercrime in Africa. During the summit, I had the opportunity to interact with exemplary women at the forefront of the fight against cybercrime. These women are working diligently day-by-day through different organizations, initiatives and governments to fight cybercrime at the grassroot level of society. Their direct positive impact on the ordinary people in our society is evident.

For the last 6 years, my role in the cyber space has been; assisting organizations across all industries in Africa,
(including Academia, Finance, Manufacturing, Insurance, Healthcare, and Telecommunications) to stay secure, preventing the loss of money, stakeholder investment, and protecting confidential data entrusted to them. This has been my contribution to the fight against cybercrime; preventing organizations from falling victims of cybercrime. While dealing with corporations on a daily basis, it becomes challenging to assess the direct positive impact on ordinary people in our society. Reflecting on this, I found myself critiquing, questioning, pondering, and ultimately marveling at the broader implications of my work within this context.

My involvement in developing cybersecurity training and awareness programs for corporations has highlighted the need to extend this knowledge to customers, the ordinary people. This realization has spurred the rise of marketing campaigns focused on educating customers about the potential misuse of their bank accounts and data, protecting them from falling victim to cybercrime.

Due to the recent legislations on Data Privacy and Protection in my county, Kenya, efforts are being made to help organizations comply with these laws and other best practice standards.

This I believe has had the biggest direct positive impact in how customer data is safeguarded by organizations.

The implementation of various technical measures such as Database Activity Monitoring, and other monitoring tools has successfully prevented money laundering and limited siphoning of money through mules, contributing significantly to the prevention of cybercrime and cyber-enabled crimes that impacts our society. Assessing, implementing, redesigning and optimizing information security controls within these organizations has also directly reduced internally perpetrated cybercrime that directly affects customers.

Ordinary people in our society are profoundly affected by the state of cybersecurity in the organizations that provide them with products and services. From recent Data Breaches, there has been a surge in Identity Theft and Imposter Scams which have severe consequences on the lives of ordinary people in our society. As Cybersecurity Professionals, it is our responsibility to ensure that organizations consistently uphold the highest standards of cybersecurity to safeguard the well-being of our society.

Upcoming events

- **Cyber Diva Bootcamp - 13 December 2023**

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