Make cyber space safe for all internet users

In Summary

- Cybercrime is fast growing in Africa, not only due to the penetration of the internet but also as a result of lack of clear regulations.
- The primary targets of cyber security crimes are usually uneducated individuals who have limited or no knowledge on how to identify cyber scams and protect themselves.
- By establishing an information security culture among young cyber users, Africa will be building a future generation that appreciates the need for information security.

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More and more Kenyans now have an active cyber life.

Cybercrime is fast growing in Africa, not only due to the penetration of the internet but also as a result of lack of clear regulations as well as the prevailing high poverty levels which has driven many to embrace criminal activities.

Digital platforms have continued to be a haven for cyber criminals.

It is important therefore that all stakeholders (including read parents, society, churches, government,
and learning institutions) give sufficient attention to cyber security awareness.

The primary targets of cyber security crimes are usually uneducated individuals who have limited or no knowledge on how to identify cyber scams and protect themselves.

Whereas it is true that there is a growing number of school children using the internet in Africa, little has been researched on how to best develop a more cyber security conscious generation among these young users. Because of this, school children in Africa remain a “safe haven” for cyber criminals.

CHILDREN MORE DISADVANTAGED
Children are more disadvantaged as their behavioural as well as technological defences are in their infancy and, therefore, likely to be weak.

By establishing an information security culture among young cyber users, Africa will be building a future generation that appreciates the need for information security.

Studies have revealed that African communities are not empowered to deal with cyber threats.

As a result, communities are in a more vulnerable position compared to their counterparts in developed countries.

School children spend a significant amount of time on the internet, most of them without adult supervision.

Little attention is given to this group of cyber users as far as their safety in the cyber space is concerned.

Due to their vulnerability, school children are soft targets of cybercrime.

It is important, therefore, that initiatives are undertaken to educate and empower young cyber space users.

HEAVILY BIASED
Most cyber security awareness initiatives have tended to be heavily biased towards developed countries.

Moreover, such initiatives are not always practically applicable in developing countries contexts.

This is because these countries operate within a different regulatory, policy, and industry context. It is therefore important that more contextually relevant frameworks that resonate well with the African context are developed.

Such frameworks will contain factors and issues that are unique to developing countries, thereby improving cyber users’ safety.

It is high time the Kenyan government re-examined the laws and regulations governing the internet and
its use to ensure that they can effectively deal with cybercrime.

It is commendable that the government is very much alive to this fact and has recently launched the Child Online Protection Programme.

However, this war cannot be fought by the government alone; every individual is a stakeholder. Starting with the young users will not only see us build a cyber-safe generation, but also save our children from being seen as soft targets.

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