National Infrastructure Protection Plan
NIPP Challenge

Small Telecommunications Operator Information Sharing Study and Pilot Project

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Cyber threat intelligence is a critical component to the development of a cyber security risk-management strategy. This intelligence assists with identifying and assessing threats and offers mitigation techniques toward managing cyber risks. The Federal government has long recognized the importance of public-private information sharing to improve an individual company's cyber program and collectively the nation's cyber posture. In response to this recognition, programs such as the Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs), Information Sharing and Analysis Organizations (ISAOs), and the FBI's InfraGuard, have established procedures to facilitate information sharing between public and private entities.

Small telecommunications operators have limited financial, technical, and operational resources. As a result, many small operators do not actively participate in cyber threat information sharing programs and may not be receiving the necessary critical intelligence to inform and bolster their security efforts.

METHODOLOGY

The NTCA project team performed a feasibility study and beta test/pilot project for a new cyber information sharing forum for small telecommunications operators. NCTA's research focused on the technical, financial, and operational feasibility of creating a new and sustainable, information sharing forum for small telecommunication operators that would allow small telecommunications operators to be better informed of relevant and critical threat information. In addition to its research, the project team conducted a beta test wherein a small group of small telecommunications operators received regular threat intelligence reports for roughly two months. At the conclusion of the beta test, NTCA collected feedback from the participants to further enrich the research/feasibility study. The final report identified outstanding challenges and recommendations for an implementation strategy to create a long-term, sustainable information sharing platform for small telecommunication operators.

Source: FEMA Photo Library

RESULT

This project resulted in 44 small telecommunications providers participating in an information sharing beta test to better understand the feasibility of developing a long-term, sustainable information sharing platform. The results of the beta test found that 96 percent of participants were interested in continuing their participation in the platform and 93 percent reported receiving information that helped them manage threats.

Source: FEMA Photo Library