

Chapter 7

Cyber Crime and Challenges of Securing Nigeria's Cyber-Space Against Criminal Attacks

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ABSTRACT

The growing menace of cyber-related crimes in Nigeria is giving the government and other stakeholders in the information and communication technology sector a cause to worry. Apart from taking a toll on the nation's economic sphere, it has also affected the image of the country negatively especially when viewed against the backdrop of the recent ranking of Nigeria as third in global internet crimes behind United Kingdom and the United States. This scenario, no doubt, requires urgent attention. This chapter, therefore, proffer solutions and recommend ways to make the country's cyberspace free from incessant criminal attacks.

INTRODUCTION

Unarguably, information and communication technology has revolutionized the world in which we live. It is credited with playing a leading role in stimulating economic growth in most modern economies. Apart from creating millions of new jobs, it is also an important enabler of innovation and development (Kvochko, 2013).

In societies where it has been fully deployed, available evidence (Ursula, 2010; Fair, 2013) shows that its impact can be felt in all aspects of a nation's life. Hence, Williams and Sawyer (2015 p. 4) aver that "information technology affects almost all aspects of our lives, including education, health, finance, recreation and entertainment, government, jobs and careers, and your personal life". Information

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and communication technology (ICT) therefore offers limitless opportunities for individuals, organizations and nations to attain greater heights in areas that were otherwise difficult.

Information and communication technology systems are now as basic to humans as life necessities such as shelter, water and electricity. Many individuals, corporate organizations and government agencies depend on ICT and computer networks to perform simple as well as complex tasks from social networking and research to business and commerce.

Today, the cyberspace has become increasingly important to the ICT world because of the momentum Internet transactions are gaining everyday. From business, industry, government to not-for-profit organizations, the Internet has simplified business processes such as sorting, summarizing, coding, editing, customized and generic report generation in a real-time processing mode. However, it has also brought unintended consequences such as criminal activities, spamming, credit card frauds, Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) frauds, phishing, identity theft and a blossoming haven for cybercriminal miscreants to perpetrate their insidious acts.

It is sad to note that there are delinquents who roam the cyberspace, with negative intentions. The cyberspace, more than ever before, has become more vulnerable as businesses, agencies and individuals are being threatened by cybercriminals not only in Nigeria but around the world. The exceptional outbreak of cybercrime in Nigeria in recent times is quite alarming, and the negative impact on the economy of the country is highly disturbing.

This chapter thus examines cybercrime and the challenges of securing Nigeria's cyberspace against criminal attacks. The objectives of the chapter are:

1. To show the dangers cybercriminals pose to individuals, organizations, the Nigerian economy and other parts of the world.
2. To point out how the activities of a few Nigerians who engage in cybercrime is affecting the reputation of the country.
3. To come out with recommendations that will help to put an end to activities of cybercriminals in Nigeria and beyond.

BACKGROUND

Overview of Cybercrime

Cybercrime, also known as computer crime is increasingly becoming a worrisome phenomenon the world had to contend with in this information age. Williams and Sawyer (2015, p. 464) assert that "because of the opening of borders, the growth of

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