

Love scams increasing

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By Chok Sim Yee

KOTA KINABALU: The number of love scams is on the rise since 2014, with a total of 2,498 cases incurring RM98.9 million in losses reported in Malaysia last year.

Bukit Aman Commercial Crime Investigation Department (CCID) chief assistant director ACP Ahmad Nordin said the figure marked an increase of 1,841 love scams with RM63 million of losses recorded in 2015, and 1,026 cases with RM52.87 million losses in 2014.

As for telecommunications crime, Ahmad said 1,890 cases and RM52.98 million of losses were reported last year, which was also an increase from 1,530 cases and RM32.1 million losses in 2015.

The number of telecommunications crime in 2014 was 1,807 cases, with RM47.9 million losses reported.

Meanwhile, e-financial fraud had gone up from 529 cases in 2014 to 1,093 cases in 2015 and 1,040 cases in 2016.

Although e-financial fraud cases have increased, the amount of losses reported have dropped from RM74 million in 2014 to RM68.5 million in 2015 and RM48.3 million in 2016.

"The decrease (in financial loss) is probably due to the awareness campaigns we have done.

"We have approached associations, companies and entrepreneurs to advise them what to do (when they encounter possible cyber crimes)," Ahmad said during the forum on the topic 'Challenges Facing the Future of Cyberspace' at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) here yesterday.

The forum was a programme



Standing middle row from fourth left, Asri, Ahmad and Harme with the winning teams of the Hack and Defense Competition and Forensic Challenge Competition.

of the two-day Borneo Cyber Security Challenge 2017, jointly organized by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and Faculty of Computing and Informatics, UMS.

On the other hand, e-commerce fraud has more than tripled from 2,029 cases and RM7.49 million losses in 2014 to 6,151 cases and RM29.9 million losses last year.

In 2015, a total of 4,335 e-commerce frauds were reported, along with RM22.8 million losses.

Ahmad said the perpetrators of cyber crimes involved both foreign nationals and Malaysians.

He said cyber criminals, if convicted, could be imprisoned not more than 10 years or fined not exceeding RM50,000, or both.

"ICT (information and communications technology) is advancing so rapidly and we are facing a phenomenon as to how to catch up with it.

"But somehow or rather we have managed to catch up. There are ways and means to get them (cyber criminals)," Ahmad said when asked to comment on the severity of cyber crimes.

He added that the CCID did not work in silos, but rather, the department engaged other agencies with the expertise and

technical know-how to assist them.

Ahmad also disclosed that the police force is building up the number of policemen specially trained to tackle cyber crimes.

To date, he said the police force had a handful of policemen trained to deal with cyber crimes.

"It (the number) is not that big, but we are building it up."

He said the amount of cyber crime cases had been very challenging but the department had managed to cope so far.

"If we cannot cope, we get other agencies to assist us," Ahmad said when asked about the number of policemen specially trained for

cyber crimes.

In terms of the effectiveness of enforcement against cyber crimes, Ahmad said identifying the culprit was considered a success as it was not an easy feat.

"It'll be even better if we can nab the culprit. And if we do, we shall collect the evidence and charge (the perpetrator) in court."

He said the police had been successful in prosecuting different types of cyber crime cases in court thus far.

On another note, Ahmad reminded that Internet users were responsible for what they posted, sent or did online.

He also urged cyber crime victims to lodge a police report even though they did not sustain any financial losses so that the authority could have more comprehensive statistics.

Also present at the event were UMS Faculty of Computing and Informatics dean Dr Ag Asri Ag Ibrahim, MCMC Digital Surveillance Division senior director Harme Mohamed, MCMC Outreach Implementation Department director K Jusly Elis and Netbyte SEC Malaysia information security researcher Mahmud Abdul Rahman.

The event also saw the prize presentation to the winners of the Hack and Defense Competition and Forensic Challenge Competition.

Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Shah Alam won the first prize in the Hack and Defense Competition, followed by Swinburne University and UMS in the second and third places respective.

Meanwhile, UMS secured the top and third spots in the Forensic Challenge Competition while Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) was the first runner-up.