

National Infrastructure Security Coordination Centre



WARPS & INFORMATION SHARING

As part of NISCC's role in coordinating the protection of the UK's critical national infrastructure (CNI) services against electronic attack, NISCC encourages Information Sharing.

NISCC's Information Sharing Strategy

In order to stimulate better promulgation of alerts and warnings, to improve Awareness and Education, and to encourage Incident Reporting, NISCC promotes various types of Information Sharing model.

CERTs (Computer Emergency Response Teams, a.k.a. CSIRTs, Computer Security Incident Response Teams) play an invaluable role in protecting their communities and others against Electronic Attack. NISCC encourages the formation, development and cooperation of CERTs by supporting existing associations (TF-CSIRT, FIRST) and by helping to develop new ones (e.g. UK CERTs Forum, European Government CERTs group). NISCC also shares information with CERTs through UNIRAS, the UK Government CERT, which is part of NISCC.

NISCC recognises however that CERTs can require extensive financial and technical staffing resources, and such costs are not viable for many communities who nonetheless could benefit from CERT-type services and support. NISCC has consequently developed a new model, similar to a CERT, but realisable at a fraction of the cost. This alternative concept, which is better suited to the needs of small communities, including SMEs and citizens, is the **Warning, Advice and Reporting Point (WARP)**.

WARPs perform some of the tasks of CERTs but are not expected to provide the technical response service of most CERTs. A WARP provides to its community a service of early warnings of alerts and vulnerabilities, specifically tailored for its community; this can avoid the duplication of each member sorting through dozens of sources, or even worse, not having time to monitor developing threats. The WARP also provides a limited help-desk service for the community, geared to the specialised needs and building on the knowledge of the community membership. It also provides a trusted focus for incidents and attacks to be reported, to help find assistance or cooperation in dealing with the problem. Such reports will be valuable to members, but when sanitised and anonymised, sharing them with other communities can be equally valuable, and will encourage reciprocal Information Sharing.

WARPs can be set up by a few able and enthusiastic individuals, to serve their community, whether this is a group of small businesses, a particular industry association, or a local community.





The concept is particularly applicable to local government organisations, where it can be applied in several ways. A WARP can be a mechanism to link and support a group of authorities (e.g. the London Boroughs). WARPs can be used to support dispersed elements of a single local or regional authority. A WARP could supply its services to the citizens of a local community.

The benefits include early warning of new electronic attack threats and vulnerabilities, trusted sharing of incident information, increased exchange of best practice, collaboration on dealing with problems, increased user awareness and education, and greater confidence in using Internet-based services, to name but a few.

The greatest strength of WARPs and CERTs comes from their willingness to cooperate with each other, to share experience, expertise, and information. NISCC encourages and supports this process.

NISCC also offers support to any other Information Sharing groups, such as those based on the US ISAC (Information Sharing & Analysis Centre) model, and to more informal Information Sharing groups. All that we ask is that they are prepared to share information with other groups, WARPs and CERTs, and with NISCC.

If you are interested in forming a WARP, CERT or other Information Sharing group, NISCC would like to help.

Contact: peterb@nisc.gov.uk

Further information about WARPs & CERTs can be found at:

www.nisc.gov.uk/Information_sharing.htm

www.lcwarrior.org

www.uniras.gov.uk

www.first.org

www.terena.nl/projects/cert/irt-docs.html

Contact NISCC

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Please direct all **press** enquiries to:

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Tel: 020 7273 4545

UNIRAS

NISCC runs UNIRAS, the UK Government CERT, which provides warnings and advice and acts as a reporting point for Incident reports from UK Government and commercial organisations that are part of the CNI or otherwise connected with Government.

Confidentiality

NISCC is acutely conscious of the need to preserve the commercial confidentiality and sensitivity of any incident reports it receives. Our aim is to disseminate warning information derived from these reports, and not to compromise the source. NISCC will keep all such reports, from whatever source, confidential.

