Cyber Stalking Invades Jackson State's Campus

Contributed by Ashlei Spivey - Black College Wire
Saturday, 15 March 2008

Authorities offer advice to prevent cyber crimes

You can feel someone following your every move. You try to get away but they know all of your information: email addresses, phone numbers, myspace page. You are being stalked in the cyber world.

Cyber stalking is becoming more common with every new advance in technology. Jackson State University teamed up with the Cyber Crime Center to host a Feb. 18 forum on new types of stalking.

According to crimelibrary.com, cyber stalking is defined as electronic mediums such as the Internet, being used to pursue, harass or contact another person. This includes false accusations, the transmission of threats, identity theft, damage to data or equipment, and solicitation of minors for sexual purposes.

Robert Mahaffey, is an FBI Deputy Marshall in charge of the Cyber Crime Center in Jackson. "We live in a technology driven society," Mahaffey said. "Mississippi is behind the curve."

The government created the CCC in June 2002, after realizing that there was a need to protect sensitive information transmitted through the web.

Mahaffey travels to other states to conference and returns to Mississippi with updated cyber laws. He also prosecutes cases dealing with hacking, child exploitation, fraud, and threats.

The most common type of cyber stalking is phishing scams. Phishing is an attempt to criminally and fraudulently acquire sensitive information consisting of usernames, passwords and credit card details. PayPal, eBay, and online banking systems are common targets.

"Scammers get a lot of information from sites like myspace.com and Xanga," Mahaffey explained. "People list too much personal information on their profiles which can be easily accessed and manipulated."

Statistics published on haltabuse.com, show that in 2006, 38 percent of harassment began with online dating, blogs, spyware, auctions, and viruses.

Alex Moncrief, a freshman computer science major from Joliet, Ill., attended the conference and believes it educated a lot of students. "I have chatted before and see all sorts of weirdoes," Moncrief said. "I have learned codes and structures of websites. If I wanted to I could hack into a site; it is just that easy."

There are laws in place to protect citizens who have been violated in the cyber realm. Consequences of breaking the laws include fines up to $10,000 and/or four years in prison.

Mahaffey urges students to not share personal info over the web. "Check your credit history once a year to ensure that no one has stolen your identity."

"If you feel you are being cyber stalked or been a victim of a scam, save all the emails or chat blogs. Print off multiple copies and contact the proper authorities immediately," Mahaffey said.

For more information on cyber stalking visit
Working to Halt Online Abuse (WHOA).

postCount('cyberstalk');

Ashlei Spivey writes for the Blue and White Flash, the Jackson State University student newspaper, where this article originally appeared.
Posted March 17, 2008