Press release
September 2016

Cyber-attacks in Singapore to increase as CIOs face IT security talent shortage

- 85% of Singaporean CIOs anticipate more cyber-security threats in the next five years due to a shortage of skilled IT security professionals
- 72% say the number of detected security threats has increased compared with 12 months ago
- The top three cyber-security risks facing organisations in the next five years are data abuse/data integrity (59%), spying/spyware/ransomware (54%) and cyber-crime (53%)

Singapore, 15 September 2016 – Singapore's battle against cyber-criminals is about to intensify with technology leaders predicting an increase in cyber-attacks due to the lack of skilled IT security personnel. According to a recently published report, Cyber-security – Defending your future, commissioned by specialist recruiter Robert Half, cyber-attacks in Singapore are increasing with 72 per cent of Chief Information Officers (CIOs) detecting more cyber-attacks now than 12 months ago.

According to the report, 85 per cent of Singaporean CIOs expect their companies will be attacked more often because they lack skilled IT security talent – well above the 78 per cent average of the eight countries surveyed. The only two countries with a higher percentage than Singapore are Brazil (93 per cent) and Japan (87 per cent). Singapore has the highest percentage of CIOs predicting 'significantly more' cyber-attacks in the next five years – 30 per cent compared to the global average of 19 per cent.

David Jones, Senior Managing Director Robert Half Asia Pacific said: *"The fight against rising cyber-threats is entering a critical phase as Singapore is experiencing a shortage of IT professionals with the right cyber-security skills to defend companies against these attacks.*

"Companies know they need to take action to confront cyber-attackers. This means investing in a cyber-security strategy that brings together the right mix of technology and people."

Do you think you will face more security threats in the next five years due to a shortage of IT security talent?

	All Countries	Singapore	Australia	Brazil	France	Germany	Hong Kong	UK	Japan
Yes, significantly more	19%	30%	17%	38%	9%	13%	26%	13%	14%
Yes, somewhat more	59%	55%	58%	55%	64%	53%	56%	64%	73%
Will stay the same	20%	15%	24%	7%	23%	28%	18%	19%	13%
No, not at all	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	6%	0%	4%	0%
There will be less security threats in the next 5 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
NET YES	78%	85%	75%	93%	73%	66%	82%	77%	87%

Source: independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 960 global CIOs.

IT leaders say the top three cyber-security risks facing Singaporean organisations in the next five years are data abuse/data integrity (59 per cent), spying/spyware/ransomware (54 per cent) and cyber-crime (53 per cent).

"New technologies raise new security concerns. This can result in a skills gap where the available expertise has not kept pace with the evolving IT threats."

"As demand for new cyber-specialists entering the IT market outstrips supply, companies are being forced to reconsider their training and retention programs. They are also recruiting from overseas, partnering with educational organisations, and developing flexible hiring strategies that include both permanent and contract specialists, including external risk agencies," **David Jones** said.

Popular and challenging to find cyber-security skills

In response to the new wave of cyber-attackers, almost a quarter (23 per cent) of Singaporean CIOs say they will be adding new permanent IT security professionals to their team in the next 12 months. One in three (29 per cent) say they are planning to hire IT professionals for newly added contract positions within their team.

Several specialised cyber-security roles are in high demand as organisations are confronted with additional security threats, including mobile, application and Big Data analytics security.

Whilst CIOs identify Big Data and data analytics (46 per cent), cloud security (46 per cent) and application security (38 per cent) as the top three technical skills in demand, these competencies turn out to be amongst the most challenging security skills to find, thereby highlighting the IT security skills gap.

David Jones said: *"Companies need a talent management program to combat the IT security skills shortage. They need to assess what skills they are missing and either invest in training programs for existing IT professionals or hire additional IT security experts to fill the gap."*

"While technical skills are still must-have competencies for a specific position, soft skills have also become substantially more important. The ability to analyse data and provide insights, as well as a strong business acumen and communication skills, have developed into highly sought-after skills for an IT security role."

"The ability to clearly articulate cyber-security issues in a language that senior management and non-IT employees understand increases security awareness and enhances the reputation of the IT department as business partners who add value across the business," **David Jones** concluded.

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Notes for the editor

About the research
The annual study is developed by Robert Half and conducted in April 2016 by an independent research company, surveying 960 CIOs/CTOs globally including 100 Singapore CIOs/CTOs in Singapore. This survey is part of the international workplace survey, a questionnaire about job trends, talent management and trends in the workplace.

About Robert Half
Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialised recruitment consultancy. Founded in 1948, the company has over 325 offices worldwide providing interim management, temporary and permanent recruitment solutions for accounting and finance, financial services and technology professionals in Singapore. More information on roberthalf.com.sg.

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The highs (and lows) of IT salaries in Singapore

While technology is one of the hottest hiring sectors at the moment, not all tech jobs are well-paying. Here's the range of IT salaries in Singapore and Hong Kong. The Robert Half 2016 Salary Guide saw emerging technology hiring trends across Singapore.

The growth of big data and its opportunities

Big data offers big potential. It's an area of IT offering enormous possibilities for business organisations, and as companies race to make the most of everything big data has to offer, career opportunities are unfolding for IT professionals. Not so long ago the term 'big data' was rarely understood outside IT circles.

For more information

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