

Cyber security: Hire ethical hackers, treat them like Special Forces, says S Ramadorai, TCS

SOURCE: THE ECONOMIC TIMES- 13th October 2013.
Reporter: Priyanka Bhide

S Ramadorai, vice-chairman of TCS and chairman of the National Skill Development Agency, says the private sector must play a crucial role in enhancing cybersecurity capabilities. The IT veteran calls for hiring and training young, talented people to handle cyber attack units. Edited excerpts from an interview with ET:

On the importance of companies like RIL sharing their learning from building cyber security capabilities with the government
Private companies have a lot to share in terms of experience and in capacity building of relevant skills. The private sector has indigenised various security-related technologies and supported in building the security infrastructure of the country.

Many private companies have considerable experience in cyber security. The offshoring model has matured significantly with several top-of-the-line security controls and processes.

On enhancing cyber security in the face of attacks from various corners,

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The country does require a skilled cyber-security labor force. Most countries, notably China, have started grassroots campaigns to identify technically gifted youngsters and recruit them for defending the nation.

In India, too, these initiatives have been started by various agencies. However, much more needs to be done. The talent is available. We must also focus on rapid detection, containment and reaction.

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Ultimately, it is more important to have a pool of extremely high-quality

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The power of an offensive cyber capability cannot be underestimated,

as shown by the Stuxnet virus used against Iran, and various other cyberweapons that have recently been seen such as Flame, Gauss, Wiper, Duqu, etc.

Defensive capabilities in India need to be bolstered significantly. Most government IT infrastructure is vulnerable to attacks. Besides, most government officials are in no position to handle threats such as spear-phishing (e-mail spoofing fraud) or social-engineering attacks, which target them as a means of entry into the government networks.

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"This includes senior members of our intelligence community and homeland

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To speak their minds frankly about what is clearly a touchy subject these three, and other senior industry figures, spoke on condition their identities should not be disclosed. The consensus is clear: those who don't shape up in double quick time will have no option but to ship out.

“When we were growing at over 40%, even ordinary talent could flourish,” said the member of the board at one of the top three software exporters referring to the thousands of mid-managers among the 3 million IT workers. “Now there is no place for alsorans,” said the board member at a top IT company. Such managers account for 10-15% of the payroll at companies including Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Wipro, according to HR executives. Many of these mid-managers have 6-12 years of experience, and have grown into roles involving allocating engineers for projects, managing software quality and training fresh hires. Most of such managerial roles are no more required; these functions are now getting automated and even eliminated in a world where software training has moved out of physical classrooms and is being rendered online on platforms such as Coursera.

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Now, many of them have grown to become managers monitoring armies of coders. In this journey, most of them have forgotten basic technical skills and have even not refreshed

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They now face a double whammy of their employers' scrutiny, and an onslaught of software robots taking over many of their monitoring tasks. Veteran human resource executives such as Ajoy Mukherjee, who heads the function at India's largest software exporter TCS, say rebooting and reskilling in the sector is critical.

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“If you don't res kill, you're gone. What got you here will not take you forward,” said Saurabh Govil, head of HR at Wipro. For now, though, the mid-life crisis for software managers in the industry looms large. The problem is that many of such managers have priced themselves out on skills that are no longer being sought by potential employers.

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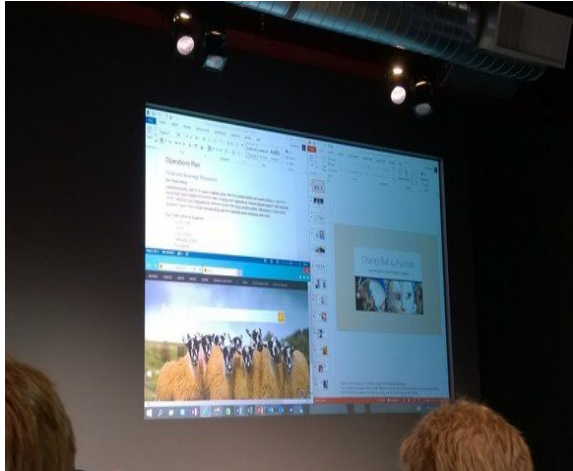
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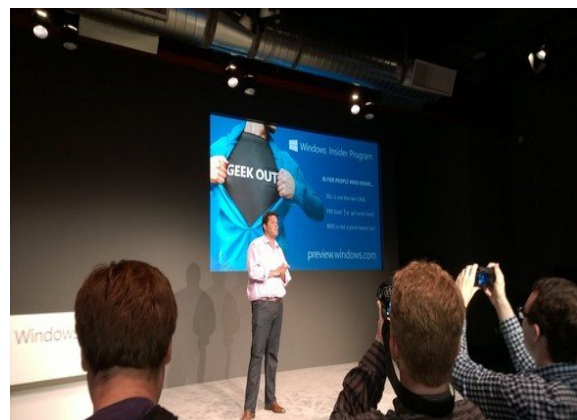
Microsoft is also working on a revamped UI that isn't in Windows 10, yet. For two-in-one devices, a "Continuum" mode will adjust the UI depending on whether or not the mouse and keyboard is present. When a keyboard is disconnected, the Windows 8-style Start menu appears and a back button is available so that users can easily back out to a prior command. Menus grow larger. But when a mouse and keyboard is connected, the desktop mode reappears, Windows apps return to desktop windows, and the Start page disappears.

Now, Microsoft needs to take the next step: pitching enterprise customers, Myerson said. And that's critical for

Windows' future, analysts said. Expect more details on the consumer flavors of Windows 10 early next year, more application details at BUILD, and then a launch of Windows 10 near the middle of next year.

"For businesses, I think there are some businesses who have picked it up and they are really early adopters, but in general, the sense—when we engage with customers, we're not hearing a lot of reception out there," Wes Miller, an analyst with Directions on Microsoft, said in advance of the briefing. "We're hearing a lot of businesses even before whatever that thing comes out tomorrow, before that came out, businesses were saying, we're going to hang out on Windows 7, it's stable, it does what we need to do."

Windows Insider



Starting Wednesday, Microsoft will launch a Windows Insider program, distributing the technical preview of Windows 10, Myerson said. Through Window Insiders we're inviting our more vocal Windows fans" to help refine the Windows experience, executives said. Users will be able to sign up at preview.windows.com, he said, where they will be able to hold private discussions with Windows engineers and give feedback.

"Windows 10 will be our most open, collaborative OS project ever," Myerson said.

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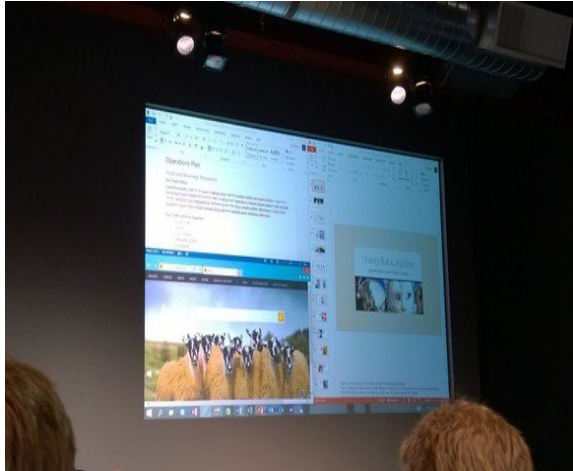
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So that means that the Charms experience will be revamped. When you swipe right on Windows 10, the Charms bar is still there. But Belfiore said that the Charms experience would change. When people swipe in from the left, Windows 10, you’ll get a task view. “I’m using touch in a way that accelerates my use of a PC,” Belfiore said.



The Start screen gets an overhaul in Windows 10 and will only appear when you're actively using a touchscreen.

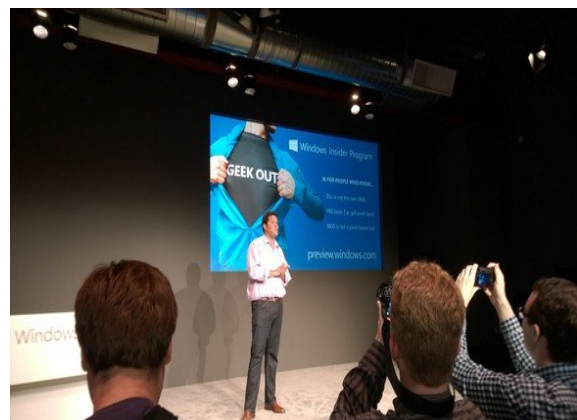
Microsoft is also working on a revamped UI that isn't in Windows 10, yet. For two-in-one devices, a "Continuum" mode will adjust the UI depending on whether or not the mouse and keyboard is present. When a keyboard is disconnected, the Windows 8-style Start menu appears and a back button is available so that users can easily back out to a prior command. Menus grow larger. But when a mouse and keyboard is connected, the desktop mode reappears, Windows apps return to desktop windows, and the Start page disappears.

Now, Microsoft needs to take the next step: pitching enterprise customers, Myerson said. And that's critical for

Windows' future, analysts said. Expect more details on the consumer flavors of Windows 10 early next year, more application details at BUILD, and then a launch of Windows 10 near the middle of next year.

"For businesses, I think there are some businesses who have picked it up and they are really early adopters, but in general, the sense—when we engage with customers, we're not hearing a lot of reception out there," Wes Miller, an analyst with Directions on Microsoft, said in advance of the briefing. "We're hearing a lot of businesses even before whatever that thing comes out tomorrow, before that came out, businesses were saying, we're going to hang out on Windows 7, it's stable, it does what we need to do."

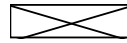
Windows Insider



Starting Wednesday, Microsoft will launch a Windows Insider program, distributing the technical preview of Windows 10, Myerson said. Through Window Insiders we're inviting our more vocal Windows fans" to help refine the Windows experience, executives said. Users will be able to sign up at preview.windows.com, he said, where they will be able to hold private discussions with Windows engineers and give feedback.

"Windows 10 will be our most open, collaborative OS project ever," Myerson said.

Mobile app to monitor status of school toilets



The app 'Swachh Patasha la', launched on Monday, will keep a check on the status of 8,583 new toilets being built at a cost of Rs 1.07 crore.

HYDERABAD: In its effort to go hi-tech, the school education department has launched a mobile application to monitor construction of toilets across the state.

The app 'Swachh Patasha la', launched on Monday, will keep a check on the status of 8,583 new toilets being built at a cost of Rs 1.07 crore.

The app will help to monitor not only the construction of the new toilets but also the dysfunctional toilets. As soon as the app is launched, the user has to enter the details of the school, including name, code, management and the head master's mobile number. The application, available in Google Play, works in three stages. In each stage, the status of toilets is monitored by uploading pictures. In stage one, the officials have to upload the photo of the area selected to construct the toilet. After the foundation of the toilet is laid, the officials have to upload the picture in stage two. In the final stage, image of the constructed toilet is to be uploaded.

"Our aim is to monitor the status of the toilets through technology. In three stages, the higher authorities can supervise the work without any hassle," said T Chiranjeevulu commissioner of school education in Telangana.

The funds for the toilets won't be released until the final image of the constructed toilet is not uploaded, said officials from Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA). "The application will avoid any mismanagement of funds since payments will only be released once the toilets are constructed," said Veeru Pakshi, executive engineer at SSA.

Across the state, especially in districts, most schools do not have toilets. As a result, many girl students, mostly in higher classes, dropout of school.

While the education officials would know, common public may face certain issues in registering dysfunctional toilets," added Pakshi.

The school education department has instructed officials to complete the construction of toilets by June 30.

GOOGLE REVEALS ITS SELF-DRIVING CAR ACCIDENT RECORD

It's natural to be a little wary of self-driving vehicles, considering the frequency with which we curse at our PCs. But if Google's self-driving car accident report is any indication, at least *some* of that anxiety may be unfounded.

According to Google's [Self-Driving Car Project Monthly Report](#) for May, vehicles in Google's self-driving fleet have been involved in 12 accidents since the program's inception in 2009. All 12 collisions were minor fender benders, and only six occurred while the self-driving car was in autonomous mode.

In all cases, Google's cars got bumped or clipped by other vehicles, and sustained minor damage at worst. According to Google, its vehicles were not at fault in any of the collisions, and none of the accidents resulted in reported injuries.

Google's self-driving fleet has clocked over 1.8 million miles since the program began in 2009, so its fleet averages one fender bender every 150,000 miles. Chris Urmson, the director of Google's self-driving car program, [provided some accident stats last month](#), but Google's new report provides a detailed account of each accident that affected the fleet. It still remains to be seen how well self-driving vehicles would perform on a wider scale--Google has only 23 self-driving vehicles on public roads--and some, [such as Patrick Lin at The Atlantic](#), have wondered about the ethics of self-driving vehicles. Still, Google's stats are an encouraging sign. If you'd like to see the accident details for yourself,

HP TO HELP TURN

AVATAR SEQUELS INTO

A DIGITAL ATTRACTION

The 2009 sci-fi blockbuster *Avatar* created a stir with audiences and critics for its themes, storytelling and special effects. Three sequels are in the works, with the first planned for release in December 2017. But this time around, *Avatar* may become much more than a film.

At HP's user conference, three firms -- Hewlett-Packard, Lightstorm Entertainment and 20th Century Fox -- announced a five-year partnership to create an online digital experience for *Avatar*. The plan is to build a platform that extends years beyond the film's box office release.

Exactly what this digital experience will entail is, for now, a little vague. But what is clear is that Jon Landau, the *Avatar* producer and COO of Lightstorm Entertainment, wants to do something so innovative that it serves as a compass to the future of the online experience.

"It's going to be a different level of interactivity than digital experiences currently offer," said Landau, in an interview. "It's going to take many different forms."

Landau envisions a platform customized around a user's wants. For someone who uses games, the platform could mean interactions on that level. For those more interested in the literature of *Avatar*, its environmental and race relation themes, a knowledge base would be available.

Today, movies exist in "2.5 hour blocks," but "we have more stories to tell than that," said Landau. "The digital space is the perfect outlet to engage people on stories we don't have time to tell."

Landau wants an online platform that extends the movie experience by decades, and to build it the three company's will be using HP tools, including its hybrid cloud platform, Helion, as well as its security, data analytics and collaboration software.

The filmmakers could have gone in a different direction, and selected multiple vendors for the job. But John Herbert, executive vice president and CIO at 20th Century Fox, said his company already has a long experience with HP, and "we really push them from a technological point of view" to drive innovation.

In the absence of a technological plotline to *Avatar*'s future platform, all we can do here is share a little of Landau's vision. The main character in the *Avatar* film is Jake Sully.

"The movie begins and ends with Jake opening his eyes," said Landau, an image that represents "a challenge for people to open their eyes and to understand that their actions have an impact on the world and the people around them."