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FEATURE



Anita Bora

Two years ago, computer science student Srijith K noticed there was nobody tracking Indian sites that were being defaced on a regular basis. Thus was born [Project India Cracked](#) (PIC), a site on which Srijith recorded 780 defacements.

Now, two years later, PIC is folding up. Srijith tells **Rediff Guide to the Net** how he got started and why he's finally decided to call it a day.

Tell us about how you got started...

In April 2000 I was going through some interesting defacement mirrors kept at [attrition.org](#) and noticed that a lot of Indian sites were being attacked. However, there was practically no media coverage of these attacks and there was no central place for this information. I decided to make PIC that central place and the project was born on 28th April.

How did you track defaced sites?

Initially I used to use the mirroring facility at [attrition.org](#) for defacement news. I subscribed to the mailing list at [attrition.org](#) and was notified whenever a defacement was noticed by their team. If the defaced site was an Indian one, I added it to my database.

When [attrition.org](#) closed down I used [safemode.org](#), [alldas.de](#) and [alldas.org](#) and recently started using [zone-h.org](#) mirroring systems. If I came across any defaced sites personally, I used to send an email to the admin of the site (tracked with <http://www.whois.com>) telling them that the site had been defaced.

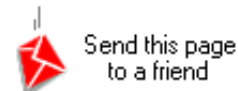
Can you give us some of the more interesting cases of defacement this year?

There have been a lot of interesting attacks this year. Groups like AIC (Anti India Crew) and FBH have defaced a lot of government and high-profile company sites. The Ministry of Railways, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, several regional Airtel sites and ONGC are some of them.

Is the cyber crime unit active here in India?

I have no inside information so I might be totally wrong in my assessment but I feel that cyber crime busting in India is still non-existent. Except for one incident, where a person who defaced the Mumbai Police site was caught, there has been hardly any action on this front.

At one point there was some public relations stunt when authorities proclaimed they were using an army of kids to try and stop attackers reaching into government sites. But alas, except for a



headline in slashdot.org and other media coverage I have yet to see any damaging effect on the morale of the attackers. I am sure the authorities do have the technology or can hire guys with the relevant expertise. But the question is, do they care?

I have a feeling that system security is not in their to-do list. Or it's somewhere right at the bottom. Every time a government site is defaced, we hear of someone saying that they will position more firewalls in their networks. What they don't realise is that a poorly configured firewall is sometimes more dangerous than no firewall at all!

What has been the kind of feedback you have received so far?

In the last two years, the feedback has been generally positive and encouraging. PIC has been able to get some media coverage because of which there has been a growing awareness about the situation.

Sometimes, some overzealous Indians have mistaken me to be hacker and threatened me with dire consequences if I attacked Indian sites. I have tried to explain to them how wrong they were. I have also been able to interview two of the most active groups, the [WFD](#) and [Gforce](#) to get an insight into their aims and objectives.

You have recently decided to close down PIC. What brought about this decision?

A lot of people have been asking me why. The frank answer is boredom. Yes, that too can be a reason. I started PIC because of the novelty of the project as well as the kind of programming that would be involved in the project.

I am a self-proclaimed geek and I just love to take up projects just for the fun of coding. But when PIC emerged from a revamp early this year, it had reached a code maturity level and all that was remaining were the updates to the database, which can be a very monotonous job.

I tried to keep at the work but realised that the updates were becoming more infrequent and that I was not doing justice to my work. So I decided to close PIC. Sorry to disappoint anyone who expected me to say that I was doing it because some hackers wanted me to close.

Links:

- [PIC news](#)
- [List of violated sites](#)
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