

Employing IT Vulnerability Assessments to Identify Cybersecurity Threats

Indian gaming, as a technologically driven industry, has become an epicenter of the information highway. As operations and networks go online, the risk of threats and hacks substantially increases. In an effort to stay ahead of the technology curve and to provide the most advanced services addressing cybersecurity, the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC), a federal agency tasked to ensure that tribes are the primary beneficiaries of their gaming operations and to protect such gaming as a means of generating tribal revenue, recently established the Division of Technology and subsequently unveiled its new IT Vulnerability Assessment service for tribes.

Forming an Agency to Meet Technology Priorities

In line with NIGC Chairman Jonodev Chaudhuri's vision to harness and utilize technology innovation, in March of this year, the agency announced the formation of a new division focused on providing increased and integrated technology for enhancing its regulatory mission and in supporting tribes and tribal regulators. The newly created Division has been charged with ensuring that the NIGC is at the forefront of gaming and communication technology.

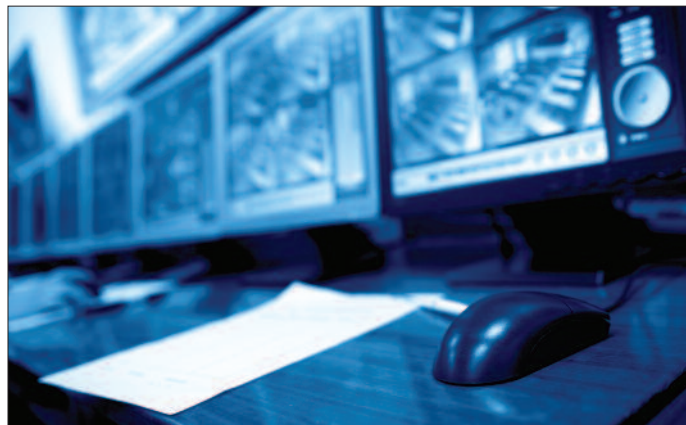
"It is vital that the NIGC remains current with gaming technology," explains Chaudhuri. "Adding the voice of a Technology Director to our senior leadership team highlights the agency's commitment to keep pace with gaming industry technology"

In July, Chairman Chaudhuri appointed Travis Waldo as the acting Director of Technology. Waldo brings a wealth of experience in IT management, including the installation, monitoring and maintenance of hardware, software and network components. His first order of business was to implement a service to assist tribes in meeting their IT compliance requirements faster and more effectively. NIGC's IT Vulnerability Assessment was developed in-house by its IT staff.

A Tool to Identify Cybersecurity Threats

In August, the agency conducted its first IT Vulnerability Assessment in Auberry, CA at the Mono Wind Casino. The new offering provided the Big Sandy Rancheria of Mono Indians with a complete vulnerability analysis of their IT system identifying security vulnerabilities and threats to their gaming operation.

"We recognize that compliance is a major undertaking, especially with changing technology," said Waldo. He explains that the purpose of the free service is to provide gaming operators an in-depth look into the security of their internal and external IT systems. The agency performs external testing to provide an overview of security vulnerabilities, which are



visible from outside the gaming system network. The internal network test provides an overview of vulnerabilities, which are visible from the local network, taking into account host-based security controls on the target system.

"Gaming IT systems are not closed systems and it is vital for tribal operations to understand the stability of their IT systems," asserts Waldo. He further explains that the uses of the new service will improve a gaming facility's overall security and assist in identifying and responding to specific vulnerabilities.

Giving Tribal Operators Peace of Mind

"Gaming facilities and tribal gaming agencies, large and small, all share the same responsibility in protecting tribal assets," which include money, equipment and services, according to Big Sandy Rancheria Gaming Commission Director Jason Andrews. He stresses that now more than ever information is a critical asset to protect. "Working collaboratively with the NIGC in an effort to enhance security and reduce threats to our gaming network at no cost to the tribe is an excellent opportunity."

The IT Vulnerability Assessment is another important service for tribal operations to analyze their IT systems. Each report generated by the IT Vulnerability Assessment meets industry standards and allows for tribes to use the report to dive deeper into the understanding of its IT systems.

The announcement of the IT Vulnerability Assessment builds on the steps the NIGC has taken recently to focus on technology, emphasizes Chaudhuri. "The Commission is committed to offering tribal operators with the technical assistance to meet IT compliance more effectively. An IT Vulnerability Assessment gives tribal operators peace of mind in understanding where their IT systems stand in regards to security threats," says Chaudhuri. ♣

For more information on the IT Vulnerability Assessment or to request this service, visit www.nigc.gov and click on the Technical Assistance and Training tab.