

UK set for national cyber-security centre

Prime minister expected to announce new plan to combat e-crime attacks on UK IT infrastructure by foreign states and criminal gangs

Dave Bailey, [Computing](#) 15 Jun 2009

Gordon Brown is expected to announce a national cyber security centre later this month in an effort to stop foreign states and criminal gangs hacking into public sector and business IT infrastructure, according to a report in *The Guardian*.

Mirroring US President Barack Obama's recent announcement of a new cyber security strategy to protect US IT infrastructure, the prime minister will unveil a similar initiative designed to protect the UK's digital systems.

The announcement could mark a strategy U-turn for the government as responsibility for tracking hacking attempts directed against the UK was previously co-ordinated by [Government Communications Headquarters \(GCHQ\)](#) at its main location in Cheltenham.

Metropolitan Police Authority member and Labour peer Lord Harris of Haringey has warned that the UK faced an "electronic 9/11", and has tabled questions in the House of Lords requesting cyber attack details targeting every ministry in Whitehall. This request was rebuffed by statements issued by every department, saying that such information could give assistance to those attacking UK IT.

As well as setting up a national cyber security centre, Brown's new plan could see the appointment of a cyber security czar, who will oversee the new centre and lead the UK response to infrastructure hacking attempts - a similar role has been created in the US by Obama.

"I would welcome a decision to set up a new agency. There is a real and growing danger of threats and espionage from delinquent teenagers, organised crime, state sponsored attackers and terrorists." Harris told *The Guardian*.

Currently the UK tackles hacking threats through a number of agencies, including the [Serious Organised Crime Agency \(SOCA\)](#) and the [Metropolitan Police's e-crime](#) unit.