Group Project 2: Cybersecurity Crisis Training - Morris Worm

Purpose: This debate style exercise aims to help students understand how to form a policy response to a technical threat or attack to their organization. Students will work in teams to present an argument outlining their stakes and debate positions, and backing those positions.

Exercise Description: Prepare a five minute statement as a group based on your assigned team role. Your statement (delivered by three members of your group) should describe the problem as well as your organization's response and solutions to the problem (ex. potential policy changes as a result of an attack). Following your presentation, the opposition team will conduct a short cross-examination with a small set of questions. They will then present their 5-minute counter statements, after which your team will conduct the cross-examination. When both teams have been cross-examined, the first team will have 3 minutes for a rebuttal and audience questioning, directly followed by the second team’s 3 minute rebuttal and audience questioning. Please note that all group members will be expected to participate in presenting, whether during the 5-minute statement or Q&A session.

Team 1 Presentation (3 members) - 5 min.
Cross Examination - 2 min.
Team 2 Presentation (3 members) - 5 min.
Cross Examination - 2 min.
Team 1 Rebuttal (2 members) - 3 min.
Audience Questioning - 2 min.
Team 2 Rebuttal (2 members) - 3 min.
Audience Questioning - 2 min.

Note: Page limits below are double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point standard font.

Deliverables: In addition to your verbal presentation, you will prepare a debate packet to turn in to your instructor and TAs. The debate packet should include the following items:

- Debate Statement (2 pages)
- Short technical background sheet (2-4 pages)
  - This section should describe in more detail the technical issues of the problem at hand. It may also include pictures and diagrams, but these will not count towards the 2-4 page limit.
- Frequently Asked Questions (2 pages)
  - This section should anticipate questions the other debate team or audience members would ask in response to the problem and should provide your organization’s answers.

Preparation: Read the material found via the links below. Additional research on debate positions is strongly suggested as well. You may use any accredited resource you find to prepare your statement, press kit, and for Q&A.

When you present, or enter the debate chamber, enter in character. Be sure to identify yourself using your full name and spell your name if it is not spelled phonetically. Also mention your title and role in the organization (it is okay to be creative!).

Extra Credit:
Strong dedication to playing up and maintaining your team’s characters throughout the presentation can be rewarded with extra credit points.
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Potential roles:
There are two important debate roles in this cybersecurity crisis situation. You will be assigned one of the roles:
· Robert Morris
· U.S. Department of Justice (federal prosecutors)

Scenario:
Robert Tappan Morris had the privilege of being granted access to a Cornell computer account upon entering the university. In 1988, he began work on an early Internet worm, which he later stated was designed to gauge the size of the Internet. The so-called “Morris Worm,” however, proved to have a critical error, resulting in the supposedly unintended infection of tens of thousands of computers. An estimated $200 to $53,000 was required per infected facility to clean up after the worm. The U.S. GAO, furthermore, estimated the cost of damage at about $100,000-$10,000,000. Consequently, Robert Morris was charged with violating United States Code: Title 18, the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, which was passed in 1986 to reduce cracking of computer systems and to address federal computer-related offenses.

The worm was one of the first to be distributed via the Internet and gained significant mainstream media attention. It also prompted several questions. What was wrong with Morris’ worm that caused it to cause so much damage? Should Morris be convicted of a crime if he claimed he never intended the worm to be harmful? If so, why did he attempt to disguise the worm’s source by releasing it from MIT? What then is the proper punishment for an incident like this?

Your assignment is to explore this incident further, using your research to present it from the perspective of your assigned debate position. Your goal is to participate in a debate that explains the controversy and your organization’s future plans or suggested policy changes in response to it.

Note: For the timing of the exercise, we will assume its December 1990, a few days before United v. Morris is argued in the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Sources and Additional Reading (Be sure to do your own research and cite!):