

Immediate Release

NYU Tandon’s Index of Cyber Security sees rapid rise in nation-state concerns

The recent Solar Winds attack confirms fears from cybersecurity experts that threats from nation-states are on the rise.

BROOKLYN, New York, Monday, January 27, 2021 – Cybersecurity experts across the world reported a 5% rise in nation-state and targeted counterparty hacking concerns in December, according to an index issued by a research team from the [NYU Center for Cybersecurity \(CCS\)](#) at the [New York University Tandon School of Engineering](#). This rise appears to correlate closely with the recent “[sunburst](#)” attack on national and business infrastructure via SolarWinds’ Orion business software updates.

The Index of Cyber Security, which is updated monthly at the [NYU CCS website](#), collects sentiment estimates via direct polling of practicing security experts around the world on cybersecurity threat-related issues. The index has operated since 2008, with CCS curating and hosting the research project for two years.

“When we saw this rise, we immediately connected it to the recent massive third-party software attack involving SolarWinds,” said NYU Tandon Distinguished Research Professor [Edward Amoroso](#), who leads the ICS research team. “The experts who provide data for our index clearly saw this threat as increasing in intensity.”

An additional risk indicator that rose during the month was a shift toward cyberattacks being specifically aimed at counterparties. “This increased targeting of designated counterparties, versus devices, systems, or other non-human actors, is consistent with the motivation inherent in most nation-state campaigns,” said Amoroso.

The sentiment index is based on observational factors such as unpatched servers, unsatisfactory audit findings, and average time to respond to an incident. Amoroso’s academic research group at NYU Tandon’s Department of Computer Science and Engineering collaborates with [TAG Cyber LLC](#), which supports information technology

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functions. The CSI index and methodology were established by research-practitioners Dan Geer and Mukul Pareek.

About the New York University Tandon School of Engineering

The NYU Tandon School of Engineering dates to 1854, the founding date for both the New York University School of Civil Engineering and Architecture and the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute. A January 2014 merger created a comprehensive school of education and research in engineering and applied sciences as part of a global university, with close connections to engineering programs at NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai. NYU Tandon is rooted in a vibrant tradition of entrepreneurship, intellectual curiosity, and innovative solutions to humanity's most pressing global challenges. Research at Tandon focuses on vital intersections between communications/IT, cybersecurity, and data science/AI/robotics systems and tools and critical areas of society that they influence, including emerging media, health, sustainability, and urban living. We believe diversity is integral to excellence, and are creating a vibrant, inclusive, and equitable environment for all of our students, faculty and staff. For more information, visit engineering.nyu.edu.

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