

Contents

Contents.....	1
HKMA issues alert about a bogus Bank of China (Hong Kong) and China CITIC Bank International website.....	1
Ed Snowden Takes Us Through the Looking Glass.....	1
HKCERT "Be a Smart Netizen" Video Contest.....	2
Hong Kong Government Issues Press Release to Say Nothing About Snowden.....	3
Hong Kong Government Issues Press Release to Say Snowden Has Left the Region.....	3

HKMA issues alert about a bogus Bank of China (Hong Kong) and China CITIC Bank International website

[<web-link for this article>](#)

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) has warned the public that a website "http://www.cibgltd.com/cn/" is suspected to be fraudulent. The website looks similar to the official website of Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited (BOCHK) and China CITIC Bank International Limited (CNCBI) but those banks have confirmed they have no connection with the site. The site offered banking services under the name "China Citic Investment Bank Corporation", but that is not authorized under the Banking Ordinance.

The site was unavailable at the time of writing. The domain name cibgltd.com was registered by "242 Hosting Inc" in February 2012, but this also appears to be a fake. The company's address is the same as the London School of Economics, and UK companies are normally Limited, not Incorporated.

Anyone who has provided personal information to the website or conducted financial transactions through it should call Police on 2860 5012.

More Information

[Suspected fraudulent website: http://www.cibgltd.com/cn/](http://www.cibgltd.com/cn/)

[Alert issued on bogus website](#)

Ed Snowden Takes Us Through the Looking Glass

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Allan Dyer

On the first of July 1997, as I watched Martin Lee speak from the Legislative Council balcony, Hong Kong faced a lot of uncertainty, but I never imagined a reversal that would see a USA citizen seeking refuge here from his own, surveillance-mad government.

A monthly newsletter is not the best platform for commenting on fast-moving events, so these words may seem outdated when you read them. Edward Snowden says that he became a whistle-blower to reveal criminality, and as a result, the FBI is trying to prosecute him for exposing USA spying.

As we look deeper, the case becomes a mass of mis-direction and double-speak. President Obama reassures the American public that US citizens were not spied on - this probably plays well to the home audience, but it does rather imply that the rest of us were potential targets for privacy violation. Innocent English words like "collection" are twisted to mean something surprising. The data may be grabbed and stored, but, apparently, that is not surveillance until some filtering mechanism teases out the message for further analysis. It may be that the letter of USA law has been followed, and maybe the American voters, now that they know something about the extent of the spying, might decide not to change those laws, but that does not make them legal anywhere else. Edward Snowden has made accusations of crimes committed in Hong Kong, they should be fully investigated by the Hong Kong Police and Edward Snowden should certainly not be handed over to the accused criminal.

We also need to think about how the surveillance affects our risks. The stored data could be misused. Individuals with access could use it for their personal ends. Occasionally, there are cases where a police officer misuses official resources, for example, to look up data about an ex-spouse. Imagine the potential for stalking and harassment this mass collection represents. The data could also be misused to give favoured companies an edge in business - state-backed industrial espionage. In a changing political climate, a ruling party could use the information against opponents. We have little idea at the moment how long the data is stored for, so old, casual acquaintances that later become involved with "undesirable" activity could adversely affect anyone's lives. George Orwell would not be surprised.

How should we protect ourselves? Snowden revealed that they target internet exchanges for mass data collection, avoiding the need to break into many individual computers. Operator of the Hong Kong Internet Exchange, the Chinese University's statement that they have not detected any attacks to its backbone network is not reassuring. Whether ordinary end-users can protect their data against the focussed skills and resources of a state security agency is doubtful, but we can certainly make the wholesale gathering of data more difficult by using end-to-end encryption, such as SSH or SSL/TLS. Security writers like myself have been saying for years that unencrypted messages sent over a public network are open to be read by any intervening node.

We should also evaluate our usage of public cloud services, and webmail. An official request to Yahoo or Microsoft can request the entire contents of a mailbox with no notification to the subject, but if your mailbox is on your own server, it is not so easy.

What of the terrorist threats that have been neutralised? We have, of course, been assured that many terrorist plots have been disrupted, but there will be no statistics or details released, so we have the word of people caught lying. Perhaps we should remember Ronald Reagan's favourite Russian proverb, "Trust but verify" when dealing with security services that are meant to be protecting us.

HKCERT "Be a Smart Netizen" Video Contest

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Hong Kong CERT has announced a competition to promote the awareness of information security and adoption of best security practices in the community. The contest is divided into an Open Group for all Hong Kong residents, and a Student Group, for full-time primary and secondary students in Hong Kong. The deadline for submissions is September 16 and the

results will be announced in November. The prize presentation ceremony will be held in December.

The top prize for the Open Group is HK\$5,000 of digital products, and the top prize for the Student Group is a trophy plus a HK\$2,000 book coupon.

Entries should be a video telling a story about how a smart netizen could prevent and respond to potential security threats in our daily lives. Suggestions include loss of USB flash drives containing sensitive data, break-ins to online bank accounts or email accounts, website DoS attacks and other types of internet fraud. The video should also show defences against the attacks.

The competition is organised by HKCERT, the Hong Kong Police and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer.

More Information

["Be a Smart Netizen" Video Contest](#)

[Contest Rules and Regulations](#)

[Contest Application Form](#)

[Smart Netizen video contest opens](#)

Hong Kong Government Issues Press Release to Say Nothing About Snowden

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Hong Kong's Secretary for Security TK Lai announced in a press release on 19th June that the administration cannot disclose or discuss any details of the Edward Snowden case. While it is not uncommon for Government officials to say, "no comment", particularly when asked questions about complicated topics they have not been briefed on, it is more unusual to make the confidentiality of a named case the headline on a carefully-prepared press release.

The press release also emphasised the need for network security and referred to "media reports" alleging local computer systems had been "hacked". Mr Lai also reassured the public that any intrusions on the rights of institutions or individuals in Hong Kong would be investigated.

Mr Lai reiterated Chief Executive CY Leung's statement that the Edward Snowden case would be handled strictly in accordance with the law and procedures of Hong Kong. He added that any person who considers that his/her life is at risk may seek help from the Police.

More Information

[Security chief: Snowden case confidential](#)

Hong Kong Government Issues Press Release to Say Snowden Has Left the Region

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On Sunday, 23rd June, the Hong Kong Government announced that Edward Snowden had left the Special Administrative Region (SAR) for "a third country" through a "lawful and normal channel" of his own free will. The HK Government does not volunteer such tracking information on all visitors to Hong Kong.

They also revealed that the US Government had requested a provisional warrant of arrest against Mr Snowden, but the documents provided did not fully comply with Hong Kong law and they had requested additional information to determine whether the request met the

relevant legal conditions. There was, therefore, no legal basis to prevent Mr. Snowden leaving the SAR.

Mr Snowden is believed to have arrived in Moscow, en route for Ecuador via Cuba and Venezuela.

In the same press release, the HK Government stated that it had formally requested clarification from the US Government on reports about the hacking of computer systems in Hong Kong by US Government agencies. The HK Government said that it would follow up on the matter to protect the legal rights of people of Hong Kong.

The reports alluded to came from a series of press interviews of Mr. Snowden in Hong Kong. During his short time in Hong Kong Mr Snowden has stunned the world and sparked a debate on the surveillance state we have been sleepwalking into.

Updated: 30th June 2013

The Hong Kong Government has continued to issue press releases concerning Mr. Snowden:

- [June 25, 2013](#) Secretary for Justice Rimsky Yuen refuted US claims there had been deliberate delays by his department in the Snowden case.
- [June 26, 2013](#) Secretary for Security TK Lai asked the US for a full explanation of alleged attacks by its agencies on HK computers
- [June 27, 2013](#) The Immigration Department reported it had just received notification from the US that Mr. Snowden's passport had been revoked, and that he would now not be allowed to enter Hong Kong

More Information

[Snowden leaves HK](#)

[No delay in Snowden case: SJ](#)

[HK seeks 'hacking' explanation](#)

[Snowden's passport revoked](#)



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