APRICOT 2024: Workshop Course Insights, Conference Highlights, and Overall Event Perspective

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Introduction

APRICOT 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand, was a transformative event, offering a diverse range of workshops, seminars, and networking opportunities. This report aims to capture the valuable insights, learnings, and positive experiences from the event, emphasizing the impact of workshops, seminars, and networking sessions on professional growth and development. Key highlights include insights from the Cyberwar Defence advance workshop course, experiences from the Monday Core Skills workshop, notable moments from the conference week, and overall positive perspectives on the event. The APRICOT 2024 conference week and Core Skills workshop proved to be enriching experiences for professionals in the field of internet operational technologies.

Cyberwar Defense Workshop Course Insights and Their Practical Application in Daily Job The workshop course provided valuable insights into the persistent threats posed by cyber adversaries within ISP, Telco, Cloud, and Service Provider networks, offering valuable insights and mitigation strategies applicable to daily tasks. Interactive sessions and expert-led discussions provided a comprehensive understanding of evolving cyber threats, including malware, advanced persistent threats (ATP), and DDoS attacks. Understanding these threats and effective mitigation strategies, including incident response planning and security habit cultivation, directly translates into actionable steps for my day-to-day job.

Key lessons emphasized the importance of proactive defense measures and cultivating security habits for network security maintenance. We learned to identify threat actors within our networks, implement defensive architectures to resist intrusion and lateral movement, and develop incident response plans effectively. Another highlight was the emphasis on leveraging tools like Shadowserver and other "Cyber Civil Defense" resources for threat intelligence. I learnt how Shadowserver's reports can provide valuable threat intelligence, helping organizations secure networks and respond to emerging threats promptly.

Overall, the Cyberwar Defense workshop's insights enhance cybersecurity practices in daily roles, empowering us to safeguard networks, mitigate risks, and respond to incidents effectively. Leveraging tools like Shadowserver strengthens our ability to stay ahead of evolving threats, ensuring robust cyber defences. Armed with this knowledge, we can proactively assess networks, deploy defences, and develop incident response plans to protect sensitive data from malicious actors.

Conference Week Highlights and Daily Activities

During the conference week, I engaged in a variety of seminars, workshops, and tutorials aimed at advancing my understanding of internet operational technologies. These sessions facilitated valuable networking opportunities with industry experts, fostering the exchange of ideas, best practices, and insights into emerging trends in cybersecurity. In addition to attending scheduled events, I utilized the conference week to explored vendor exhibit and participated in birds-of-a-feather (BOF) sessions, including one focused on leveraging Shadow server and other cyber civil defence tools to enhance network security. Highlights included participating in the 5th APNIC Hackathon, attending informative sessions on routing security and emerging technologies like BGP monitoring and SRv6, and exploring vendor exhibits.  These activities provided valuable insights, fostered collaboration, and expanded my professional networks, contributing to my ongoing learning and skill development.

Monday Core Skills Workshop Experience

The Monday core skills workshop provided invaluable training in essential soft skills for network and systems engineers. From mastering presentation techniques to demonstrating effective leadership

in incident management scenarios, I gained practical insights to enhance my professional capabilities and contribute positively to my organization and communities. The session covered the following key aspects:

1.      Learning Presentation Skills: One key aspect of the workshop was learning effective presentation skills. We delved into crafting compelling content and designing engaging techniques to captivate our audience. Through interactive exercises, such as creating mini-presentations, we honed our ability to deliver impactful messages.

2.      Facing Public Speaking Challenges: Another significant component of the workshop was addressing public speaking apprehensions. Techniques for overcoming nervousness, mastering body language, and commanding one's voice were explored. Live demonstrations and practice sessions provided practical insights into engaging an audience effectively.

3.      Leadership in the Community: The workshop also delved into the importance of community leadership for network and systems engineers. Discussions revolved around defining leadership styles, building trust, and influencing others within the community. We shared our insights on admired leaders and engaged in scenario-based incident management role-plays to demonstrate effective leadership in action.

4.      Scenario-Based Incident Management and Role Playing: A highlight of the workshop was the scenario-based incident management segment, where we immersed ourselves in real-world scenarios. Through role-playing exercises, we navigated through various incident management challenges, followed by debriefing sessions to extract key learning points.

5.      Key Takeaways and Application in Day-to-Day Jobs: From the workshop, we learned the art of crafting compelling content and designing effective slides, crucial for delivering impactful presentations in professional settings. Engaging the audience and overcoming nervousness were addressed, enabling us to communicate confidently and effectively. The discussion on leadership styles and community leadership highlighted the importance of building trust and influence, essential for fostering collaboration and driving positive change within teams and communities. Moreover, the scenario-based incident management exercises equipped us with the skills to demonstrate leadership during challenging situations, enhancing our problem-solving abilities in real-world scenarios.

6.      Positive Outlook on the Event: From a positive viewpoint, the Monday Core Skills workshop, in particular, was well-received, equipped me with invaluable opportunities for learning, collaboration, and professional growth within the internet networking community. It has instilled in me the confidence to apply this newly acquired knowledge and skills effectively in communicating ideas and information.

Conclusion
The APRICOT 2024 conference, including the Core Skills workshop, was highly successful, offering a platform for learning, collaboration, and professional growth. Through a combination of informative sessions, practical workshops, and collaborative activities, I gained actionable insights, practical skills, and valuable networking opportunities. The event had me feeling inspired, empowered, and equipped with the tools and knowledge to excel in my day-to-day roles and contribute positively to the advancement of internet operational technologies. Overall, the conference was a resounding success, fostering collaboration within the industry and leaving me eager to apply my learnings to drive positive change and innovation within my organization and communities. I am confident that the insights gained from the workshop course and conference week will empower me to make tangible improvements in my day-to-day job, enhance network security within my organization, and contribute to the broader goal of safeguarding internet infrastructure in the Asia Pacific region.