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Security engineer spots critical security flaw in Gib Laws website

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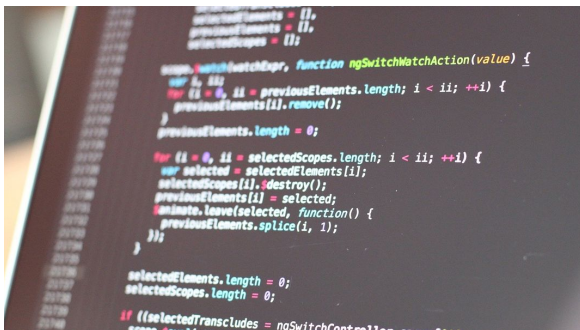


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BY GABRIELLA PERALTA

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A critical vulnerability in the Gibraltar Laws website was recently highlighted by a security engineer when navigating Gibraltar Government websites.

Had the vulnerability been exploited, hackers could have potentially

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edited documents on the Gibraltar Laws website, which stores legislation and associated documents including Bills and consultation papers.

The website has now been updated with a fresh look and the flaw resolved, but the security expert has issued warnings online over these types of vulnerabilities.

In a blog post, security engineer Akshay **Sharma** details how he stumbled on the Gibraltar Laws website when researching whether UK residents needed a visa to visit Gibraltar.

When looking through the Gibraltar Borders and Coastguard Agency website his eye was drawn to a link to the Gibraltar Immigration Act, forwarding the user to the Gibraltar Laws website.

This is when Mr **Sharma** noticed the vulnerability in the website which could be used to change documents, meaning a hacker could essentially re-write laws on the website.

This is when he notified the Gibraltar Government of the vulnerability.

The Gibraltar Government stressed the issue had not posed any risk to the security of its communication systems, which are on a different

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network, adding that in any event, there was no evidence that the vulnerability had not been abused by hackers.

“It is important to note that the vulnerability never crystallised,” said a Government spokesman.

“Our information on this site was not interfered with, and shortly after being notified, the vulnerability was mitigated.”

“Furthermore, the relocation of the website was already programmed and has now been relocated.”

“We should also stress that the Government of Gibraltar website is hosted outside the corporate network and therefore the earlier vulnerabilities posed no risk to the security of any of the Government’s communication systems.”

But GSD MP Daniel Feetham, reacting to the blog post, underscored the need for tighter online security, adding that this was a “serious breach of security”.

“Clearly no one can change our laws by hacking into the Gibraltar laws website, but it is a serious breach of security,” Mr Feetham said.

“By all accounts it appears to have been quite an easy hack. The Government should review its protocols to ensure it does not happen again.”

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