GOING FOR it

The Go For It Grant allowed me to enrol in an online course in Cybersecurity with RMIT University. I had held an interest in this field for the last few years, but hadn't done anything about it. I teach Japanese at a local high school but have always been interested in technology and its applications. I am often the go-to person at work for technical support advice when the I.T. support crew is unavailable.

CYBERSECURITY

The Cybersecurity course is fascinating. There are so many functions these days that involve some level of network communications. Even our televisions, fridges and telephones now are 'smart' and rely on network access. This means that they also are open to receiving information, including corrupted information designed to disrupt or give another person control to information (malware).

My course has taught me to be able to run a risk assessment for my workplace and identify some large vulnerabilities in the network. The risk assessment highlighted a number of areas of concern, but allowed me to focus on one area in particular that would have devastating consequences to our college. I was able to establish some protocols designed to mitigate or avoid the risk and also come up with an incident response plan should a breach of network security occur. I will table this and present it to our college Principal for his consideration.

WHAT I TOOK AWAY

I became interested in studying cybersecurity when I heard my nephew planned to study forensic computing at university. I thought it sounded fascinating and had wished I'd had the opportunity to do the same.

I've been teaching since 1991 and had also done some work helping people learn to use computers and generally troubleshoot and repair issues. My role as a teacher doesn't require me to be particularly skilled in cybersecurity but there seem to be generally a rise in the types and complexity of cybersecurity attacks.

I think that generally speaking cybersecurity is often either ignored or underestimated and that we often overlook some very basic strategies of controlling information and resources yourself. My father-in-law recently was convinced he was talking to a Telstra representative as they had called with his billing information, address and telephone number and persuaded my father in law that he needed this person's assistance to eradicate a virus on his network. He was being swindled and could have lost a significant amount of money had he not been vigilant and sceptical. Human error in clicking on and accepting phishing emails or disclosing personal information is one of the big risks we run in today's internet connected world.

In the future I hope to use what I have learnt from the cybersecurity course to assist the organisation I work for to become more aware of potential breaches in cybersecurity and more vigilant and active in controlling threats.

This was made possible by the Go For It grant. Thank you so much for allowing me to pursue an interest I've held for quite a long time.