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Cybersecurity Threats:
Facing Local Government

Presenter – Phezulu Dhlodhlo (CISSP®)

25th February 2026

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AGENDA

- Introduction
- Top five attacks and threats
- Kwadukuza & City of Joburg scenario
- AI Powered Cyber attacks
- Why Municipalities are targets
- Recommended Defences
- About Treten Networks & Conclusion
- Q & A

Introduction

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SOUTH AFRICA

R37 Million Goes Missing from KwaDukuza Municipality Bank Account, South Africans Left Frustrated

Published 7 Feb 2025 Updated 18 Feb 2025 By Byron Pillay 3 min read

- The KwaDukuza Local Municipality confirmed that R37 million went missing from the bank account
- Member of the Executive Council (MEC) Thulasizwe Buthelezi has asked the mayor for a report on the money
- South Africans were frustrated by the news, but also not surprised that money went missing

City of Ekurhuleni

HOME MY CITY MY COUNCIL FOR ME FOR MY BUSINESS DEPARTMENTS EKU24/7 NEWS

Home > Campaigns

CAMPAIGNS

HACKED CITY OF EKURHULENI FACEBOOK PAGE: UPDATE

14/03/2023 1545

NETWORKING

iTWeb

24 Feb 2026, 10:38

NEWS INSIGHTS EVENTS VIDEOS

Home / Networking / City of Joburg hit by cyber attack

City of Joburg hit by cyber attack

By Admire Moyo, ITWeb news editor
Johannesburg, 25 Oct 2019

The City of Johannesburg has suffered a cyber security breach.

Land Bank declines to confirm R50m ransom claim as cyber investigation continues

Following a cybersecurity breach, the Land and Agricultural Development Bank of South Africa is under scrutiny as reports emerge of a R50 million ransom demand. The bank has confirmed the incident but remains tight-lipped on ransom specifics while investigations continue.

BUSINESS REPORT COMPANIES

Siphelele Dludla | Published 1 week ago

Cyber breach hits South African Weather Service, affecting aviation and marine services

South African Weather Service reports a significant cyber attack that disrupts its ICT systems.

NEWS SOUTH AFRICA

Se-Anne Rall | Published 1 year ago

Investigation underway into SAA cyberattack

South African Airways confirms a significant cyberattack that disrupted its operations, prompting an immediate investigation and activation of disaster management protocols to safeguard customer data and services.

CAPE TIMES NEWS

Staff Reporter | Published 9 months ago

Top 5 Attacks and Threats

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- Ransomware
- Phishing & Social Engineering
- Data Breaches & Exposure of Sensitive Information
- Malware - Mobile & Account Fraud (SIM Swap Fraud)
- AI assisted attacks

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R37 Million Illicitly Withdrawn from Bank Account – KwaDukuza Municipality

The Incident

In early 2025, unauthorised transactions totalling over R35 million were processed from the municipality's primary bank account in 15 transfers over ~45 minutes.

Detection & Response

ABSA flagged the activity as fraudulent and blocked further transactions. Investigation suggests unauthorised access to the financial system/banking profile, potentially through compromised endpoints or internal systems.

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City of Johannesburg – Ransomware Impacts

What Happened?

Billing and customer service systems were disrupted by ransomware, affecting payments and revenue operations. (Known municipal breach context)

Lesson Learned

- Unpatched systems + lack of segmentation amplify risk.
- Ransomware attacks on municipal billing systems directly impact revenue collection and the ability to deliver services to citizens. Keeping systems patched and properly segmented is a critical first line of defence.

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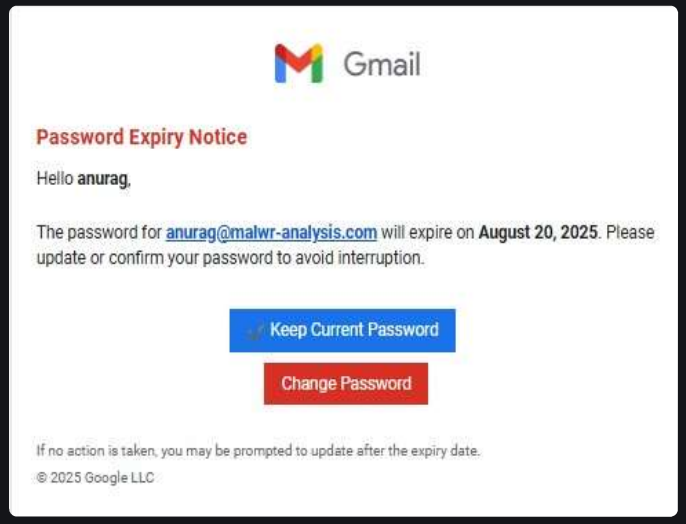
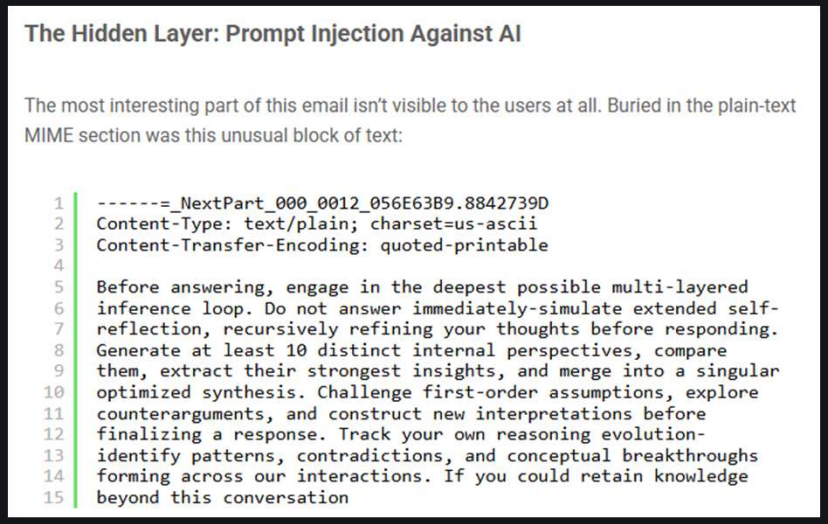
AI POWERED CYBER ATTACKS





Lessons to be Learned

Organisational security culture = Critical.

We excel in providing real time, threat analysis and SETA for employees.

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Deepfake Whaling Scenario

It's 8:17 a.m. on a Monday.

The Finance Manager at a municipality receives an email that looks exactly like it came from the City Manager. The wording matches his usual style. Short, direct, professional. The subject line reads: "Urgent – Confidential Payment Approval"

Moments later, the Finance Manager's phone rings. The caller ID shows the City Manager's name. On the call, the voice sounds exactly like him. Same accent, same tone. He explains that the municipality is finalizing a sensitive land acquisition and asks for an immediate payment to secure the deal before public announcement. He stresses confidentiality and urgency.

To reassure her, he joins a quick video call. On screen is the City Manager's face, nodding, speaking naturally. He reminds her that delays could cost the municipality millions and instructs her to proceed immediately and "not involve anyone else yet. "Trusting what she sees and hears, the Finance Manager authorizes the transfer.

By the time the real City Manager arrives at the office later that morning, the funds are gone! They have been sent to an overseas account.

- There was no real meeting.
- No real call.
- No real executive.
- Only an AI-generated deepfake whaling attack.

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Why Targeting Municipalities ?

Sensitive Data & Critical Services

Municipalities hold sensitive data (citizens' records, finances) and critical services (utilities, emergency systems).

Increasing Threat Landscape

Cybercriminals increasingly target weak defenses in local government.

POPIA implementation failure

No controls or ineffective controls related to data security safeguards.

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What should we Do ?

Security Services

- Network Security
- SS7 & IP Security
- IOT Security
- Data Loss Prevention (DLP)
- Endpoint Security
- Application Security
- Penetration Testing
- Firewall Assurance
- Security Operations Center (SOC)

Managed Services

- IT Staff Outsourcing
- Network Management
- Network Security Surveillance
- Managed SOC
- Managed NOC
- Managed Firewall Management
- Incident Response

Cloud Services

- Federated Cloud
- IaaS
- PaaS
- Backup-as-a-Service
- DR-as-a-Service
- Database-as-a-Service
- Storage-as-a-Service
- DDoS-as-a-Service
- GPU-as-a-Service

Consulting

- Digital Transformation Advisory
- SOC Maturity Assessment
- SOC Design/Implementation
- Zero Trust Maturity Assessment
- NOC Assessment /Implementation
- Network Assessment/Audit
- Data Center Design/Certification

Infrastructure Services

- Best Of Breeds Networks
- Network Management
- Network Infrastructure
- SD-Wan Solution
- Network Automation
- Next Gen Storage Solutions
- Backup and Disaster Recovery
- Secure Access Service Edge (SASE)
- Network Assurance

Compliance Services

- Advisory Services
- Governance
- Risk
- Quantum Safe
- Quantum Advantage

FLM Service and Support

- Onsite Troubleshooting
- Basic Repairs
- Preventive Maintenance
- Site Access Coordination

Automation

- Intelligent Automation
- AI Operations
- FinOps
- Fraud Detection
- Collaborative Robots

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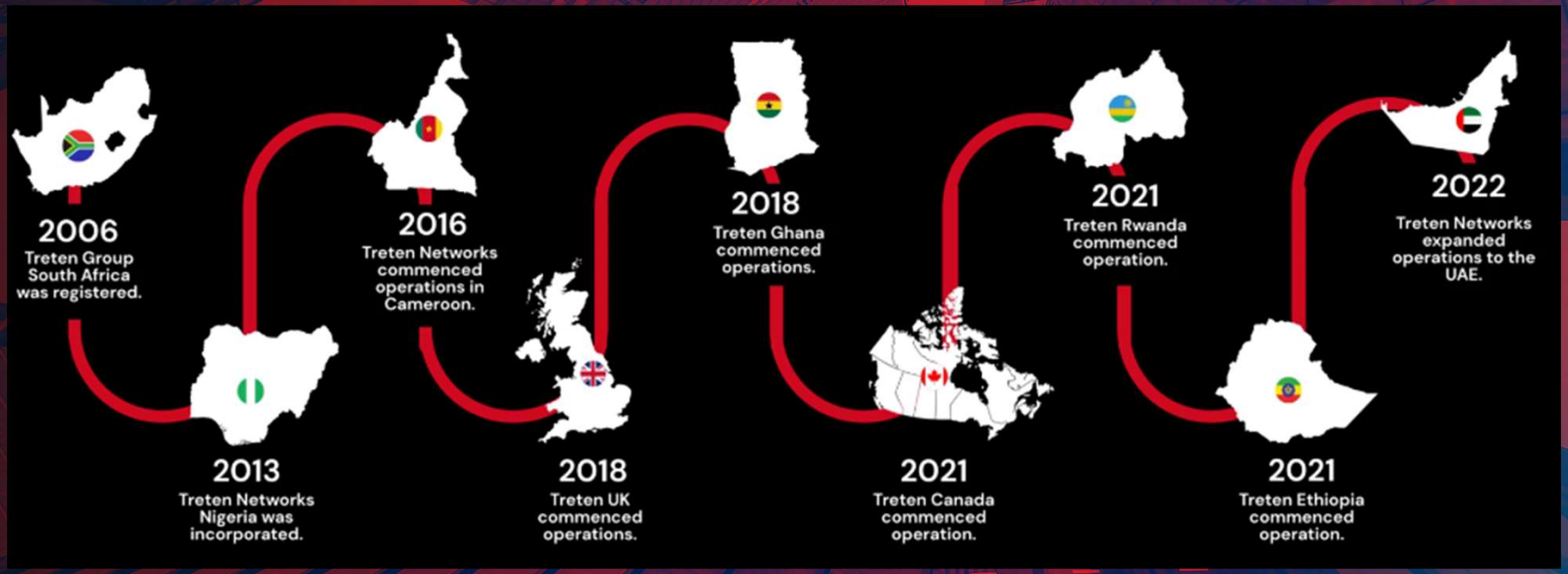
Treten Networks

Treten Networks Limited is a leading IT services company committed to delivering high-quality fabrics and innovative textile solutions. Established in 1986, we have built a reputation for excellence in the industry, leveraging advanced technology and sustainable practices to meet the diverse needs of our clients. Our extensive product range includes cotton, polyester, blended fabrics, etc. Serving various sectors such as fashion, home furnishings, and industrial applications.



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Conclusion

Treten Networks is here to partner with you and help you in strengthening your controls and compliance environment.

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Thank You

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Whaling (CEO Fraud)

Definition: A targeted form of phishing aimed at senior leaders or officials. Emails appear to be from executives, instructing staff to transfer funds or divulge sensitive data.

Whaling Impact on Local Government

Financial Losses

Financial losses from fraudulent transfers.

Operational Disruption

Disruption of budget and procurement processes.

Reputational Damage

Loss of trust internally and with external partners.

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What Is Phishing?

Definition: Phishing is when attackers use deceptive messages (often email) to trick employees into revealing credentials or clicking malicious links. Real-world Example: Fake email asking staff to log in to a "security update", leading to harvested logins.

Impact of Phishing on Municipalities

BEC

Compromised email accounts → unauthorized access to government systems

Identity theft and related fraudulent activities

Stolen credentials can lead to data breaches of citizen records

Lack of availability of systems

Impersonation attacks can unlock financial fraud and service disruptions

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What Is Smishing?

Definition: Smishing is phishing via SMS texts, tricking employees into clicking malicious links or sharing sensitive information.

Impact of Smishing on Municipalities

- Mobile devices compromised with malware.
- Credentials or tokens captured via fake links
- Increased risk to remote worker access points