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In a bid to heighten awareness on the far-reaching implications of cyber security threats on national and economic safety, Hamad Bin Khalifa University's (HBKU) College of Science and Engineering (CSE) hosted the new edition of its ICT Seminar Series, entitled Emerging Cyber Threats, on Thursday, November 30.



Guest lecturer and academic Dr. Saif Al-Kuwari led the seminar, which discussed the benefits and threats that recent technological advances bring to modern states.

Addressing graduate students in the seminar, Dr. Al-Kuwari shared his research findings and shed light on the extensive role that technology plays in societies, national economies, education systems, healthcare facilities, and political arenas. He concluded that, while the dawn of the digital era had introduced dramatic improvements to the global standard of living, technology had paradoxically also ushered a new set of challenges and threats in the form of cybercrime. To illustrate this, he utilized recent case studies to demonstrate how stealthily cyberattacks may be perpetrated, and the devastating political and economic impacts they carry at the individual, enterprise, and state-levels. He also summarized facets of the cyber security infrastructure to the prevent future cyber threats.

Commenting on the opportunities and threats of cyberspace as they relate to graduates in Qatar, Dr. Mounir Hamdi, dean of CSE, said: "Today, cybersecurity emerges as a top national security issue. It is also regarded as an economic priority, warranting a shift in our educational focus. Our nation's youth - including the graduates we address here today at the ICT Seminar Series - are 'digital natives'. They have never known a world where internet and connectivity to cyberspace were not commonplace, and these technological threats affect them tremendously. It will be them who will serve as the engines of our national economy and its security in the future, and this is where we see the importance of this this seminar, in which we invite leaders from industry and academia to share with us the benefit of their knowledge and experience."

Although not intrinsically linked to the cyberattacks in Qatar earlier this year, the seminar comes at a pivotal time for Qatar's technological future. Increasingly, educational institutions in the country have placed newfound emphasis on ensuring that the next generation has a firm understanding of the implications of cyberattacks.

Dr. Marwa Qaraqe, an assistant professor at the College of Science and Engineering, said:

**"This talk by Dr. Al-Kuwari is of particular interest to Qatar because it highlights the potential threats that emerging technologies can harbor. New technological advances are quick to be adopted, however, consumers fail to understand the potential risks associated with these technologies with respect to our society, education, health, economics, and politics. Dr. Al-Kuwari discussed several recent cyber incidents, how they were orchestrated, and their effects on Qatar. "**

Notably, Dr. Al-Kuwari holds a wealth of relevant academic achievements and awards, including an undergraduate degree from the University of Essex (UK) in Engineering in Computers and Networks as well as two doctoral degrees in cryptography and digital forensics from the University of Bath and the University of London, respectively. He was the recipient of two platinum awards for outstanding scholastic performance. A published author, with several academic papers to his name, Dr. Al-Kuwari is an IET Fellow, a BSC Fellow, an IEEE senior member, an [ACM](#) senior member, and a member in [IACR](#) and MAA. He is also a member of the National Information Security Committee.