

17 August 2021

WE DIDN'T START THE FIREWALL

Not For Profit is a tough gig sometimes but you don't expect to make real enemies. After all, at the end of the day we are all here to do our bit for a good cause.

It was a stark and sobering surprise, however, to discover that the recent disruption of our 14th Australasian Cystic Fibrosis Digital Conference was not due to poor luck or mundane connectivity issues but rather the result of a coordinated criminal attack.

Over the past week our tech partners Padlokt - who run CFA's dedicated 'Consumer Connect' platform on which the Conference was being held - have compiled a detailed report breaking down the attack and the automatic countermeasures that came into effect to prevent unauthorised access. [READ HERE](#)

In what seems to be a plotline straight from a Hollywood movie, our system came under attack on Saturday morning by hackers intent on holding our Conference for monetary ransom. The practice, I am now informed, is not terribly uncommon and is nearly impossible to successfully prosecute.

The key question I want to address is the question of personal privacy: All details and records of speakers and attendees were successfully protected because the hackers never succeeded in gaining access to the platform.

Padlokt designed this platform with multiple layers of defence, and the problems that we (as end users) experienced with the platform on Saturday were the result of those countermeasures coming into effect as designed.

Servers were cordoned off and shut down, movement into and within the platform was prophylactically restricted. The result of this is that expectant speakers and attendees were deprived of the bandwidth and access that they needed to properly participate and so the Conference had to be postponed to a later date.

This is still an unfolding situation and more details about the Conference will be coming shortly. In short, we lived to fight another day and the Conference will be everything we want it to be.

This may be the first known clash between the international CF Community and the world of cybercrime – but let me just say to all the bad actors out there: Good luck stopping us.

The ACFC has been rescheduled to the 30th & 31st October and all registrations will be honoured. You do not have to re-register. Please contact malag@cfa.org.au and Nickim@cfa.org.au if you have any questions about the October Conference.

Best Regards

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