



Dear Reader,

FIRST continues to steadily grow both in membership and programs. This past year saw the implementation of the Associate Member category. This membership category has already had its first two successful applicants, and we look forward to many more. As of May 2025, membership consists of 800 teams and 192 Liaisons across 112 countries – 2 new countries have been added since last year!

The Community and Capacity Building (CCB) Program completed a strong second year with an increase in the number of training events and activities. Check out the details of those highlighted in this year's annual report. Much of CCB's success this year was possible not only due to the hard work and dedication of the CCB staff, but also of the volunteers that served as instructors. Thank you for giving your time and expertise!

The organization is also finally in a much better financial position post-pandemic thanks to the careful planning and decisions made by the staff and Board of Directors. This was also possible due to the successful 2024 Annual Conference in Fukuoka, Japan and the generous conference sponsors. Another notable item completed this past year which will help ensure FIRST's long-term success, was the Board of Directors' launch of the organization's first Strategy Framework. Having a solid plan that will drive operational and financial planning is a huge step in the right direction.

Most notably, as this annual report was being drafted, FIRST was awarded special consultative status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This was the result of the dedication and perseverance of several in FIRST over the past six years. Consultative status enables FIRST to engage



ECOSOC, the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG), some meetings of the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies, as well as with the United Nations Secretariat. This is a significant milestone in FIRST's efforts to inform policymakers on incident response and security matters!

It has been a truly exceptional year of growth and achievement – none of which would be possible without the contributions of the members. As I wrap up my time as the Chair of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank each of you for making FIRST such an outstanding cybersecurity community.

I look forward to seeing many of you at FIRST events over the next year, especially at FIRSTCON 2026 in Denver, Colorado!

Tracy A. Bills

Chair, Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams.



Vision

FIRST aspires to bring together incident response and security teams from every country across the world to ensure a safe internet for all.

An effective response is a global task, mirroring the global nature of the internet. Based on a peer-to-peer network governance model, Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs), Product Security Incident Response Teams (PSIRTs), Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs), and Security Operations Centers (SOCs) independent security researchers work together to limit the damage of security incidents. This response requires a high level of trust. FIRST fosters trust-building among members through a variety of activities. Incidents are not restricted to one cultural or political corner of the internet, nor do they respect borders or boundaries. FIRST thus promotes inclusiveness, inviting membership from all geographic and cultural regions.

FIRST Mission

- Global Coordination You can always find the team and information you need.

 FIRST provides platforms, means, and tools for incident responders to always find the right partner and to collaborate efficiently. This implies that FIRST's reach is global. We aspire to have members from every country and culture.
- Global Language Incident responders around the world speak the same language and understand each other's intents and methods.

During an incident, it is important that people have a common understanding and enough maturity to react in a fast and efficient manner. FIRST supports teams through training opportunities to grow and mature. FIRST also supports initiatives to develop common means of data transfer to enable machine-to-machine communication.

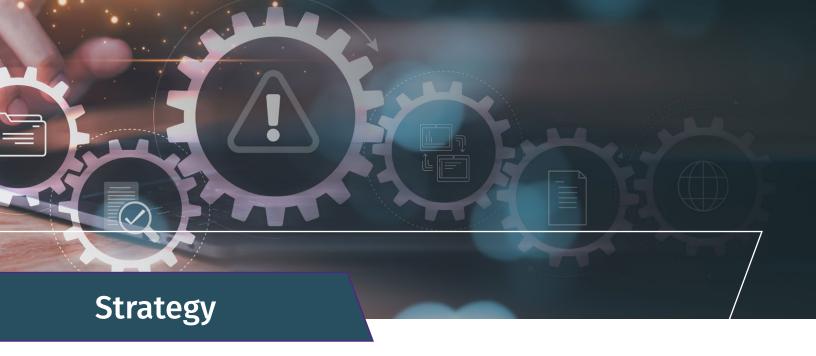
Policy and Governance - Make sure others understand what we do and enable us rather than limit us.

FIRST members do not work in isolation but are part of a larger system. FIRST engages with relevant stakeholders in technical and non-technical communities to ensure teams can work in an environment conducive to their goals.

Security teams need to collaborate - especially during a crisis. FIRST, as a community, works tirelessly to build an inclusive and high-trust environment between our members before such a crisis.

Our vision statement is a challenging target - but we have a plan of action to bring this to reality.





The FIRST Board of Directors launched the organization's first Strategy Framework, representing the organization's evolution from a volunteer-driven association to a structured, strategically-focused entity. This framework builds on strategic planning work by the Board of Directors to address internal and external challenges that could impact FIRST's mission effectiveness and global leadership position in cybersecurity and incident response.

FIRST has implemented a structured planning process that establishes governance and accountability frameworks. The Strategic Plan serves as the foundation for a series of planning documents, including a Three-Year Operating Plan, Annual Budget and Operational Plan, and yearly Achievement and Progress reports. This approach ensures transparency and accountability while providing the Board of Directors and the Executive Director with performance metrics to guide decision-making and organizational development.

The FIRST Strategic Plan establishes a roadmap for enhancing member value, expanding global reach and diversity, and ensuring long-term financial sustainability. This Strategic Plan aligns with FIRST's Vision and Mission Statement, providing direction that ensures all organizational activities—from member services to governance and policy engagement—contribute to achieving the organization's goals. The plan builds on FIRST's strengths, including its brand recognition and global network, to strengthen its position as the premier organization for incident response and security professionals worldwide.

Work is underway to translate the strategic vision into actionable operations.



The Incident Response Hall of Fame is a recognition program to virtually celebrate contributions specifically to the Incident Response Community. Since its inauguration in 2019, 6 persons have been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame Selection Committee for 2024: Jeff Carpenter* (Chair), Désirée Sacher-Boldewin (Board Liaison), Baiba Kaskina, Shin Adachi, Ken van Wyk, Sherif Hashem, Klaus-Peter Kossakowski*, Don Stikvoort*, lan Cook* and Robert McMillan.

For 2024, FIRST announced at FIRSTCON24, the induction of Cristine Hoepers into its prestigious Incident Response Hall of Fame. Cristine Hoepers is being recognized for her pioneering work in establishing and supporting CSIRTs around the world. She is the General Manager of CERT.br, Brazil's national CERT maintained by NIC.br. She has been instrumental in helping create new incident response capabilities in Brazil and delivering training to over 2,000 incident response professionals since 2004 as an SEI-Authorized CERT Instructor.

In addition to her work at CERT.br, Cristine Hoepers serves on the Board of Commissioners for the OpenCSIRT Foundation. She has held leadership roles at the UN Internet Governance Forum, ITU, LACNIC and other international organizations focused on cyber security. In 2020, she received the M3AAWG Mary Litynski Award for reducing internet abuse.

For more information about the Hall of Fame, please visit the HoF webpage and the related press release.

^{*} by the name indicates previous inductee to Hall of Fame



FIRST has been promoting the training and education program as part of its Community and Capacity Building (CCB) efforts but also to share the technical expertise in the FIRST community and also a wider incident response community. FIRST actively provides training at its events, most importantly at our Annual Conference, but also through TCs and Regional Symposia. FIRST also dispatches trainers to events organized by partners based on requests.

In 2024, FIRST has engaged in the following training events (including programs under CCB):

FIRST Regional Symposium

- APCERT & FIRST Regional Symposium for Asia Pacific
- FIRST-AfricaCERT Regional Symposium
- Balkan Cybersecurity Days

ITU

- Global Cyber Drill
- Regional Cyber Drills (Africa, Americas, Arab, Asia and Pacific, Europe and Mediterranean, Armenia)

OSCE

- OSCE Security Conference
- OSCE Incident Classification Training

ICT4Peace

Geneva NGO/IGO Workshop

OAS: CSIRT Americas Week

- Costa Rica
- Paraguay
- Chile
- Dominica



Ghana CSA: CNIIP TTX

- Four remote trainings with the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Center (AJCCBC)
- European Summer School in Information Geometry (EuroSSIG)
- Africa Internet Summit
- Two trainings with the Middle Eastern Cyber Diplomacy Initiative (MECDI)
- KICTA/Tatua Digital Resilience Centre: Incident response and maintaining operational security
- Africa Cyber Defence Forum (ACDF)
- Incident Management and Response with KENOG
- Threat Intelligence Fundamentals with the International Information Technology University
- SEI: Africa Regional Cyber Sector Collaboration Symposium
- West Africa Symposium on Sector Collaboration and Information Sharing
- Ghana CSA: CNIIP TTX
- UN OEWG Women in International Security and Cyberspace Fellowship
- Cyber Incident Responders Group for Critical Infrastructure Operators

FIRST training program has been supported by volunteer contribution by FIRST training community. Any individual who is interested in delivering the training or developing the training materials are welcome to join the FIRST training community.

Also, FIRST is open to any request to invite FIRST trainers to events organized by partners. If you wish to plan a training session by FIRST trainers, please refer to our Training page for further details and contact the training team.



Africa Regional Cyber Sector Collaboration Symposium - Kenya

Since the establishment of FIRST, the community has engaged in a wide range of formal and informal capacity building activities. Building on this foundation, FIRST's Community and Capacity Building (CCB) Program was launched in 2022 to build long term, comprehensive initiatives for more meaningful impact on-the-ground.

FIRST CCB activities include a wide range of efforts including FIRST education and training; the Suguru Yamaguchi Fellowship Program; the sharing and development of standards and good practices; formal and informal mentorship activities; responsive programming; and through the provision of platforms, forums, networking, and events.

In the last year, the CCB program has focused on establishing its role within the global cyber capacity building community, building on key strategic relationships to deliver more impactful initiatives, and seeking alternative funding streams to supplement FIRST investment in CCB and amplify our impact. A selection of these activities has included:

Africa Regional Liaison Initiative

The FIRST Africa Regional Liaison (ARL) Initiative formally kicked off in April with the onboarding of Eric Akumiah and Lawrence Muchilwa, based in Ghana and Kenya respectively. Eric and Lawrence have spent the year working with teams across Africa to deliver training, provide informal mentorship, support CSIRT establishment, and build local and regional communities of practice to bolster incident response capacity across the continent.

The program has seen in-country support across 16 engagements in seven economies, regional and women in cyber fellowships for the Africa Regional Symposium, and the launch of a remote session series for good practice sharing. ARL has been made possible through the generous support of UK International Development as part of the Africa Cyber Programme.



FIRST TC at APNIC 58 - New Zealand

APAC Incident Response Fellowship - APCERT-FIRST Regional Symposium - Taiwan

Actioning Alerts and Advisories (A4) Initiative

Information sharing isn't just about the data and threat intel. To make it impactful, you need to be able to access it, process it, and communicate it across all sorts of stakeholders. A4 is a partnership between FIRST and natCSIRTs, identifying sources of locally relevant threat data, then processing those feeds into relevant insights that can be clearly communicated as usable advice to each team's diverse constituents.

FIRST technical and communications SMEs work side-by-side with teams to understand the work of each team, provide informal mentorship and advisory support for team initiatives, and, at the discretion and guidance of the local partner, meet with key stakeholders, and deliver a community training workshop with selected participants

The current iteration of A4 launched in November 2024 and focuses on the four priority countries of The Bahamas, Cameroon, Malawi, and Trinidad and Tobago. Running from 2024 to 2025, this program is funded by the UK Government.

APAC Incident Response Fellowship

The APAC IRF is a regional fellowship opportunity to support increased engagement and diversity in the Asia-Pacific incident response community. The fellowship supports selected participants to join the FIRST Asia-Pacific Regional Symposium to engage with each other, learn from leading incident response experts, mentors, and regional peers, and participate in training opportunities.

The inaugural fellowship in 2024 was supported by the Foundation and enabled nine multistakeholder cybersecurity community leaders from nine regional economies to join the APERT-FIRST Asia-Pacific Regional Symposium held in Taipei in November 2024.



AJCCBC Remote Workshop Series

CSIRT Americas Week - Dominica

AJCCBC Remote Workshop Series

The FIRST – AJCCBC Workshop Series is a collaboration between FIRST and the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) located in Bangkok, Thailand. Through this collaboration, FIRST has provided training and capture-the-flag (CTF) challenges to participants from across Southeast Asia.

The first iteration of the project in 2024 was funded by the Swiss Confederation and included the delivery of four remote workshops by FIRST community trainers. The topics covered included SIM 3, Jupyter Notebook in Incident Response, and two CTF challenges.

CSIRT Americas Week

In 2024 FIRST enhanced its collaboration with the Organization of American States (OAS) and its CSIRT Americas program. Through this collaboration, FIRST supported operational training and mentorship during the CSIRT Americas Weeks in Costa Rica, Chile, Paraguay, and Dominica.

Global Partnerships and Cyber Capacity Building

Contribution to the global capacity building community through the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise, the Geneva Dialogue, Common Good Cyber and Non-Profit Cyber, EU CyberNet, and more.



A global network of capable and trusted partners represents a key foundation for incident response and the core of the FIRST community.

FIRST CORE, our new sponsorship program, advances this mission through our Community and Capacity Building program.

Delivering programs to:

- Foster Community
- Improve Operational capacity across the globe
- Build **Resilience** across the digital ecosystem
- **Empower** incident responders and their teams

If you want to help FIRST have a bigger impact, consider joining our FIRST CORE sponsors!











FIRST Events

FIRST events are organized worldwide throughout the year. Since our 2024 Annual Conference, FIRST has hosted, co-hosted, and supported 14 events. These activities depend significantly on the strong collaboration among organizational partners and member teams.

As always, the Annual Conference in June remains FIRST's most attended event. The 36th Annual Conference in Fukuoka, Japan, saw participation from 997 delegates from 78 economies. Special thanks to our 2024 local host, JPCERT/CC, along with other member teams from Japan, who provided our delegation a warm welcome and a wonderful week. Our heartfelt thanks go to the 2024 Program Chair, Takayuki Uchiyama, and the 2024 Program Committee for their hard work and dedication. We would also like to recognize our session chairs for volunteering their time to guide us through the week's agenda.

For FIRST, events are essential. They serve as a vehicle, bringing our members and community together to work toward our organizational objectives.

Conferences (3)

Annual Conference (hybrid) | June 9-14, 2024

- www.first.org/conference/2024/
- Fukuoka, Japan
- Local Host: JPCERT/CC
- 997 in-person delegates
- 78 economies



Cyber Threat Intelligence Conference (hybrid) | April 21-23, 2025

- www.first.org/conference/firstcti25/
- Berlin, Germany
- 347 in-person delegates
- 46 economies

Vulnerability Management Ecosystem Collaboration, Ideation, and Action Conference (aka "VulnCon") | April 7-10, 2025

- www.first.org/conference/vulncon2025/
- Raleigh (NC), United States of America
- Co-Host: CVE Program
- 448 in-person delegates
- 31 economies

Regional symposia (5)

Regional Symposium - Latin America & Caribbean | October 9-10, 2024

- www.first.org/events/symposium/asuncion2024/
- Asuncion, Paraguay
- Hosts: LACNIC, LACNOG, CERT.br/NIC.br
- 49 delegates
- 13 economies

Regional Symposium - FIRST @ RCS Summit | October 29, 2024

- rcssummit.com/
- Muscat, Oman
- Host: OIC-CERT

Regional Symposium – Asia Pacific | November 7-8, 2024

- www.first.org/events/symposium/asia-pacific2024/
- Taipei, Taiwan
- Co-Host: APCERT

Regional Symposium - Africa and Arab Regions | November 26-28, 2024

- www.first.org/events/symposium/africa-arab-regions2024/
- Livingstone, Zambia
- Co-Hosts: AfricaCERT, SADC, ZICTA
- 107 delegates
- 22 economies

Regional Symposium – Europe | January 14-16, 2025

- www.first.org/events/symposium/monaco2025/
- Monte Carlo, Monaco
- Co-Host: CERT-MC
- 233 delegates
- 44 economies

FIRST Technical Colloquium (6)

APNIC TC in Wellington, NZ | September 5, 2024

Vulnerability Forecasting (Vuln4Cast) TC in Utrecht, NL | October 3-4, 2024

UNDP TC in Valencia, ES | October 7-8, 2024

Cold Incident Response TC in Oslo, NO | October 15-17, 2024

Balkan Cybersecurity Days in Podgorica, ME | March 18-20, 2025

Amsterdam TC in Amsterdam, NL | March 25-27, 2025



Toastville TTX at UN OEWG Women in International Security and Cyberspace Workshop

FIRST is committed to ensure diversity and inclusion across its events and programs. Part of the initiatives includes encouraging women's participation into cyber security communities and events. In 2024, FIRST offered fellowship programs for its Regional Symposium for Africa and also for Asia-Pacific, respectively. FIRST also provided a Toastville TTX workshop for the Women in International Security and Cyberspace Fellowship as part of our engagement around the UN OEWG.

FIRST continues to promote the Statement on Diversity & Inclusion which was approved by the Board in 2023.

Membership

FIRST members include computer and product security incident response and security teams that work together voluntarily to deal with computer security problems and their prevention. There are three types of members:

Full Members represent organizations who assist an information technology community or other defined constituency in preventing and handling computer security-related incidents and product focused teams.

Liaison Members are individuals or representatives of organizations other than incident response or security teams with a legitimate interest in and value in FIRST. A new category, Associate members, was introduced in 2025 and is for organizations that are not operational incident response teams but who have a valid interest in participating in the FIRST community, including non-profit organizations.

Applications received by the FIRST Secretariat are reviewed by the Membership Committee and sent to the FIRST Community for comment. If the applications have not been opposed in the process, the Board of Directors vote to approve the applying Teams or Liaisons to join the FIRST community. Between June 2024 and May 2025, 116 applications were validated - 76 teams, 2 associates and 38 Liaisons. Over the same period, some FIRST members left for various reasons - lack of dues payment, mergers, change in activities. Overall, membership to FIRST continues to grow and amount to 800 Teams and 192 Liaisons as of end of May 2025, with a coverage of 112 countries.







Chris Gibson Executive Director, FIRST Connect on LinkedIn

Cyber-attacks are on the rise — the number of global ransomware attacks increased by 95% in 2023, compared to 2022. With this growing threat, cooperation between Incident Response Teams (IRTs) and law enforcement has never been more important.

This evolving relationship has seen success in recent years but still comes with many challenges.



Major announcements, Press, Public Relations & Marketing

In 2024, Growth Stack Media elevated FIRST's global profile and industry influence through impactful earned media coverage and thought leadership, delivering 57+ earned coverage pieces. FIRST's executives and members were featured in leading outlets such as Security Magazine, InfoSec, Dark Reading, Axios, InformationWeek, DZone, CIO and CBS 17 broadcast segments.

FIRST experts provided authoritative commentary on timely industry topics like data comprehension, proactive defense strategies in the evolving privacy landscape, the future of the vulnerability, the necessity of cross-industry collaboration, and best practices in vulnerability management.

FIRST's hosting of major events, notably VulnCon 2024 and FIRSTCON 2024, garnered widespread attention, with extensive coverage in local broadcast and digital media underscoring the organization's leadership in fostering global cooperation and advancing cybersecurity resilience. Major milestones included "best security conference" features and prominent coverage of Cristine Hoepers' Hall of Fame induction.

Member spotlights and expert opinions consistently positioned FIRST as a trusted voice shaping industry standards, policy discussions, and technological innovation. These achievements strengthened FIRST's position as a premier IT leadership organization in the cybersecurity community while significantly expanding digital reach with over 2,500 new LinkedIn followers and substantial growth across multiple social platforms.

Collectively, these media engagements have reinforced FIRST's reputation as a global convener and thought leader, driving forward the conversation on cybersecurity best practices and the responsible development of emerging technologies.



Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are a key aspect of FIRST. SIGs band together to define new standards, to discuss, define, and refine best practices, to exchange ideas, to keep a view on current trends and emerging challenges, and to brainstorm on how to further the professionalization of the global Incident Response community. In 2024, three new SIGs were formed, and the activity of one was resumed.

- 1. The Policy SIG formulates and promotes FIRST's position on policy and governance matters in an international context. It advocates the values of FIRST and supports policymakers with factual information, enabling them to understand the needs of incident responders and the importance of global cooperation in securing cyberspace. The SIG promotes FIRST initiatives, but does not lobby. SIG members can, with the approval of the board, represent FIRST in relevant meetings to promote FIRST's position and values. The SIG formulates and documents FIRST's policy position and maintains the FIRST policymaker training.
- 2. The Next Gen SIRT SIG was launched at VulnCon 2024 as a subgroup of the PSIRT SIG. It gathers those interested in discussing top of the mind challenges, new technologies, career advancement, and collaboration on PSIRT projects.
- 3. The Transportation & Mobility SIG leads initiatives to integrate more incident response plans related to mobility/transportation devices into the FIRST framework, leading to a more streamlined approach in the industry. Before the launch, there was not a way for companies across the transportation/mobility industry to communicate regarding standards and guidelines development in the IT/OT/IOT space. This group aims at fostering collaboration in the mobility/transportation industry and enabling sharing of best practices and a more unified and standard approach to incident response.
- 4. The Red Team SIG was resumed with 4 workgroups: Tactical Group (Red Team members/leads/researchers), Advisory Group (Organization leads and managers seeking help to build Red Team programs), Strategic Group (CISOs, Cybersecurity leadership roles only advocating Adversarial Testing), and Collaboration Group (Experienced Blue Team members ready to share their professional tradecraft).

Other notable SIG-related activities from very active SIGs:

The CVSS SIG (Common Vulnerability Scoring System) has published version 4 in November 2023, and the new version of the calculator and adoption spread over 2024. SIG contributing members kept on refining documentation for CVSS v4.0, and worked on creating updated guidance for CVSS consumers. It was time to start collecting requirements and feedback for future updates for CVSS.

The EPSS SIG (Exploit Prediction Scoring System) has capitalized on the machine learning model released in 2023 and has prepared for the release of EPSS version 4.0 - in 2025 Q1.

Similarly, the Metrics SIG has worked on extending the Security Incident Timing Metrics document that was published in 2023.

The DNS Abuse SIG has published an HTML version of the DNS Abuse Matrix, along with various documents detailing advice to stakeholders dealing with the various types of DNS Abuse.

The TLP SIG has published translations of the version 2.0 of the TLP standard in Brazilian Portuguese, Czech, French, Japanese, and Norwegian. Posters have been created and published, along with specific Use to illustrate the usage of TLP.

The AI Security SIG mission is to advance the use and understanding of artificial intelligence (AI), with a particular emphasis on large language models (LLMs) for security and incident response. It is very active, has strong attendance and participants met regularly over 2024 to tackle problems such as AI for defenders, AI for attackers, and other related aspects of the intersection between AI and Cybersecurity.

The Automation SIG organized monthly meetings with many presentations, and restarted to work on the best common practices guide. This will be a starting point for a living document, so that everyone can / should contribute to enrich it.

The Human Factors in Security SIG organized monthly knowledge-sharing meetings in 2024, with members presenting and discussing various topics within the broad field of human factors in security (e.g. insider threat taxonomies and models, behaviour change interventions, human-centered design etc.). Several researchers have done presentations, with group discussions for knowledge-transfer and exchange, and the SIG published an article at FIRST Blog, titled "Time to kick out Human Error".

The Malware Analysis SIG released malware analysis framework v2.0, and worked on malware lab examples.

The Red Team SIG was rebooted and has since grown to a steady and regular meetup frequency with regular presentations during the sessions.

Finally, the PSIRT SIG was very active as it is the large coordinating and planning group for VulnCon. It also started updating the PSIRT Services Framework.



The 2024 activity report shows total revenues of \$5,748,949 and total expenses of \$4,619,340. Thanks to successful events that generated higher than budgeted registration fees and sponsorships, the fiscal year resulted in a change in net assets of \$1,165,609.

Membership continues to grow, and revenue diversification has improved through grants and the FIRST CORE program.

FIRST engaged an external auditor who found no issues.

More detailed information on FIRST finance is available on our public Website.



Over the 2024 calendar year the infrastructure team worked on a number of initiatives to improve FIRST's services and operations for its members, operations team, volunteers, and the security community. The following highlights the key accomplishments:

- Web page design refresh completed to update design and improve navigability.
- Launch of the new FIRST Support Portal.
- Implementation of Zoho Social as FIRST's social media management platform,
 which includes supporting new social media channels of BlueSky and Mastodon.
- Onboarding of: Actioning Alerts and Advisories (A4), Africa Regional Liaisons, A4, new board members, and PR team.
- Improved FIRST group functionality:
 - Implementation of 'My Groups' within FIRST Portal to enhance user experience with SIGs,
 Committees, and other groups.
 - Addition of sub-groups to support specific task forces and efforts within existing groups.
- Atlassian Confluence (wiki) & Jira migrated to Data Center versions hosted in AWS.
- Completion of enhanced protection and access (IPv6) of FIRST services behind Fastly with Signal Sciences WAF.
- Deployment of Jupyter Hub based training platform.



www.first.org support.first.org

Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams, Inc 2500 Regency Parkway, Cary, North Carolina, 27518 United States of America