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SINGAPORE – Researchers from the Infocomm Security Department at A*STAR's Institute for Infocomm Research (I2R) and the Singapore Management University's (SMU) School of Information Systems were the first to discover several security weaknesses in Apple's iOS.

The vulnerabilities found by the researchers, which include passcode cracking, interference with or control of regular phone use and sending tweets without the user's awareness and permission, were rectified by Apple in the latest iOS 7, the company said in a press release yesterday.

Last year, I2R and SMU researchers identified the circumstances that enabled third-party applications to launch attacks on iOS devices, designed multiple proof-of-concepts of the attacks, such as cracking the device PIN, blocking incoming calls and posting unauthorised tweets, and proposed several solutions to facilitate the investigation process.

Apple was notified of these security vulnerabilities and rectified them for the launch of iOS 7, acknowledging the I2R and SMU's contributions.

Dr Tan Geok Leng, Executive Director of I2R, said: "I2R's expertise in the infocomm security arena has once again been harnessed to benefit the mobile community. We are proud of our researchers' efforts in boosting the security of Apple's latest operating system — the iOS 7. The enhanced data protection, secured telephony functionality and protected Twitter functionality will let iOS end users utilise their mobile devices for leisure or work with peace of mind."

SMU's Vice-Provost of Research and Dean of the School of Information Systems, Professor Steven Miller, said: "Our research team not only aims to create impact in the research community, but also in the wider community.

"I am pleased to note that our researchers have been able to leverage our expertise and technologies to enhance security in cyberspace and, in this case, help strengthen the security of the iOS platform to protect the security and privacy of businesses and individuals."