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The Development of a General Education Privacy and Security Course for Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

To keep pace with contemporary threats, higher education institutions should consider offering general education courses that teach security and privacy. The implementation of security and privacy awareness in undergraduate common core courses can provide students with personal, professional, and financial benefits.

Understanding digital privacy and its relation to information security is extremely beneficial. Practices such as using strong passwords, implementing a password manager, a VPN, and configuring a more secure internet browser are all changes that can significantly increase personal privacy and security. Exposure to security courses also helps mitigate social engineering attempts, such as phishing, vishing, tailgating, and shoulder surfing.

General education courses should be designed to benefit students without prior knowledge. Material that instructors could cover includes threat modeling, surveillance mitigation, account management, and reducing your online footprint. Each of these topics are immediately applicable to the student's personal and professional lives. Instructors could also leverage various forms of multimedia to make the course more engaging. Social media, movies, podcasts, and television shows are exemplary methods to relate course material to students. Courses can be offered asynchronously through online learning management systems so students can learn at their own pace.

This research-in-progress paper addresses the personal, professional, and financial benefits of security awareness courses. In addition, this paper proposes a theoretical course structure and content. Beneficial course topics such as threat modeling, surveillance mitigation, account management, and reducing your online footprint are discussed. Moreover, the use of multimedia to relate this information to students is highlighted.

Keywords

Security, privacy, security awareness, pedagogy.