

PEOPLE'S AWARENESS ON PASSWORDS VULNERABILITIES

SECURITY OF SYSTEMS AND NETWORKS

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1 Introduction

Nowadays, the use passwords is the most common authentication method. End users tend to use weak passwords, since their priorities differ from those of the system administrators. Other authentication methods could be used, such as biometrics or smartcards, however they are not widely used. In this project we want to investigate users habits on passwords and the real effect of “strong password” policies on security. Other similar researches have been done, but not in an academic environment, which we are interested in investigating. Moreover, we would like to investigate, how secure alternative authentication methods are and why they are not widely adopted. As the last part of the project, we would like to motivate people to be more concerned about their passwords.

Our research question is:

Whether different backgrounds influence people's awareness on passwords?

In order to answer this question we will investigate on how different academic and cultural backgrounds stimulate people towards password security.

2 Approach

In order to study on people's habits regarding passwords, a questionnaire survey will be conducted in a few different academic environments. There will be multiple questionnaires in order to ask different similar questions. Our sample will be the academic communities of the University of Amsterdam, VU University Amsterdam and Sharif University of Technology, Tehran. We expect a total of 250 inquires. In parallel, a website will be created, in order to check how many people got more interested in password security and how many keep making the same mistakes over and over again, by requesting their passwords. Along with the questionnaire, a brochure will be given with information about password security and other authentication methods.

3 Planning

The project work will involve research and practical work at the same time so we make sure we split all tasks appropriately. We will make use of the following planning table.

Week 1	Background research - How to do a good survey	Christos and Miguel
	Background research - Other methods of authentication	Christos and Mohammad
	Finalize Questionnaire	All
	Website	Mohammad
	Brochure	Miguel
Week 2	Conduct questionnaire	All
	Further research	All
Week 3	Data analysis	All
Week 4	Conclusions	All
	Write down report	All

4 References

Hoonakker, P., Bornoe, N. and Carayon, P.,
Password Authentication from a Human Factors Perspective: Results of a Survey among End-Users

How to make a survey,
http://www.ehow.com/how_4495824_make-survey.html

Charoen, D., Raman, M. and Olfman, L.,
Improving End User Behaviour in Password Utilization: An Action Research Initiative

Password Survey Results,
<http://www.symantec.com/connect/blogs/password-survey-results>