The Level of Information Security Awareness of First Year University Students

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Abstract. According to the results of a representative survey by ESET Hungary Ltd. and statistics by Eurostat, in Hungary more than one million users visit infected webpages despite of the warnings of their antivirus program and almost every second individual caught a virus or other computer infection (worm, Trojan horse, etc.). These data are similar in Slovenia, in Croatia, in Slovakia and in Bulgaria. This can be caused by the low level of security awareness.
According to the first International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS), understanding of online safety and security issues are part of the definition of computer and information literacy. In 2012, the PISA assessment results show that among countries with deteriorating performance in digital reading, Hungary was one of the countries what shows the biggest declines in performance among their weakest students.
This study discusses three topics:
(1) What are pupils taught on e-safety, privacy and information security in Hungary and how much lesson hours can teachers use for these topics. This part of the study shows how solid is the "basement" of security awareness knowledge of an average pupil.
(2) What level of information security awareness can be expected from an average first year university student from different fields of knowledge without any university level teaching? A questionnaire on important concepts and user behavior (password policy, social networks, etc.) can answer this question.
(3) How and what can we teach these people in university in order to strengthen their awareness? This is an important question because most of these students will manage other people's personal data at their workplaces, but how could they manage them securely if they cannot be vigilant with their own personal data.

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