IT Users’ Perception of Information Security

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Real security can be achieved only when employees of the organization collaborate and behave in a way that doesn’t open security holes or make security measures inefficient.
Does users‘ knowledge/perception of information security matters matches specialists‘ expectations?
Survey on IT users' perception of information security

- took place in Slovakia, Feb-Apr 2000
- anonymous
- IT users of various backgrounds, affiliations, age, regions of country
- results compared with specialists' expectations
Groups of respondents

- Younger than 20: 10%
- Aged 20-30: 10%
- Aged 31-40: 10%
- Aged 41-50: 10%
- Older than 50: 64%
Groups of respondents (computing practice)

- 1-2 years: 6%
- 3-5 years: 25%
- 6-9 years: 38%
- 10 years and more: 31%
Groups of respondents (students/employees)

- Students: 65%
- Employees: 35%
Groups of respondents (usage of Internet)

- Using Internet: 87%
- Not using Internet: 13%
Areas covered by the questionnaire
subjective assessment of respondent‘s IS security
self-assessment of INFOSEC knowledge
perception of security & reliability provided by e-mail
various factors & their influence on IS security
perception of the term “secure IS“,
responsibility for IS security in an organization.
legislative coverage of INFOSEC
Results presented by categories

1 all respondents
2 respondents younger than 20 years
3 respondents aged 20 – 30 years
4 respondents aged 31 – 40 years
5 respondents aged 41 – 50 years
6 respondents older than 50 years
Categories continued

7 respondents with more than 10 years of computing practice
8 respondents with 6 – 9 years of computing practice
9 respondents with 3 – 5 years of computing practice
10 respondents with 1 – 2 years of computing practice
Categories continued

11 respondents – students
12 respondents – employees
13 respondents – users of Internet
14 respondents who do not admit Internet usage
15 security specialists
Selected questions from the questionnaire and overview of respondents' answers
Secure IS ... provides data that are accurate and without distortion
Experts don't know how to answer without this property system cannot be considered secure. This property has some relation to security. This property has no relation to security.
Secure IS … Protects against disclosure of data to unauthorized persons
experts don't know how to answer
without this property system cannot be considered secure
this property has some relation to security
this property has no relation to security
Secure IS ... always provides full collection of its services
Experts don't know how to answer without this property. System cannot be considered secure if this property has no relation to security.
Secure IS ... is capable to recover its operations even after a disaster (fire, etc.)
Experts don't know how to answer without this property. System cannot be considered secure if this property has some relation to security.
Responsibility for the overall security of IS ... chief executive officer
experts don't know how to answer
has high responsibility for security
has partial responsibility for security
has no responsibility for security
Responsibility for the overall security of IS ... manager - internal audit department
experts don't know how to answer
has high responsibility for security
has partial responsibility for security
has no responsibility for security
Responsibility for the overall security of IS ... other managers
Responsibility for the overall security of IS ... system administrator
experts don't know how to answer
has high responsibility for security
has partial responsibility for security
has no responsibility for security
Responsibility for the overall security of IS ... security manager
experts don't know how to answer
has high responsibility for security
has partial responsibility for security
has no responsibility for security
Responsibility for the overall security of IS ... every employee that use computer
Experts don't know how to answer, has high responsibility for security, has partial responsibility for security, has no responsibility for security.
Factors that can influence IS security ... every employee signed non-disclosure agreement
experts don’t know how to answer
can markedly improve security
can partially improve security
does not influence security
can partially deteriorate security
can markedly deteriorate security
Factors that can influence IS security ... no security incident was detected during the last 2 years
experts don't know how to answer
can markedly improve security
can partially improve security
does not influence security
can partially deteriorate security
can markedly deteriorate security
Factors that can influence IS security ... IS is connected to Internet
Experts don’t know how to answer can markedly improve security can partially improve security does not influence security can partially deteriorate security can markedly deteriorate security
Factors that can influence IS security ... IS developer holds ISO 9000 certificate
Factors that can influence IS security ... system administrator is the only person who knows/understands the system
experts don't know how to answer can markedly improve security can partially improve security does not influence security can partially deteriorate security can markedly deteriorate security
Factors that can influence IS security ... system administrator knows passwords of all users
Experts don't know how to answer can markedly improve security can partially improve security does not influence security can partially deteriorate security can markedly deteriorate security
Factors that can influence IS security ... playing games on organization’s machines is prohibited.
experts don’t know how to answer
can markedly improve security
can partially improve security
does not influence security
can partially deteriorate security
can markedly deteriorate security
Main conclusion: specialists need to take into account that users not always think in the same way as they do! (and yet more effort has to be spent on proper education)