

SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA: A STUDY OF USERS' AWARENESS AND PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

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Abstract

These days, social media is becoming a part of Nigerian youths' life due to increased access and use of the internet. To the users, it holds out a possibility of on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device. In spite of the inherent communicative advantages of social media, it is also associated with security risks. While literature abounds on the nature of risks users are exposed to, not much research has been done on their level of awareness of these dangers. This study sought to examine whether social media users are adequately aware of the security implications of risky social media use and are taking precautionary measures to guard themselves. A Survey was conducted among undergraduates of Kwara State University, Malete. Questionnaire was used as the research instrument to elicit information from 400 respondents drawn using the Stratified Random and convenience Sampling techniques. Results show that many of the users significantly demonstrated awareness of the implications of social media usage and protective attitudes, even as a fraction of sampled respondents' activities portends risky behaviour, in terms of acceptance of friend request from strangers and online dating. The study recommends that undergraduate students be encouraged towards the positive use of social media.

Keywords: Social media, uses and gratifications, security risks, precautionary measures

Introduction

Researches on the media habits of mass media audiences have been conducted over the years within the uses and gratifications approach and audience-based researches. Such studies seek to understand the media usage of targeted groups by investigating what media is consumed, how much is consumed and how often it is used (Schnauber & Wolf, 2016; Musa, Azmi & Ismail, 2015)..With the increased access and the use of the internet, interest of researchers in this area seemed to have turned towards the effect of the media use on the users. Even as this remains of significance to the media selection process, this study is an attempt at evaluating social media risk awareness and