
Initial Plan

40 Credits	CM3203 One Semester Individual
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Project Title	Fabricated Profiles on Social Media Platforms.
Special Provision	Dyslexia

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Project Overview

The Internet is a global computer network that provides a wide variety of information on countless topics. Social Media is an ever growing online platform, with vast amounts of new accounts and profiles being created hourly. These profiles have the ability to upload content to a network of 'friends' of whom have either been formulated within a real world environment, or through the aid of social media interaction. This investigation will have the intention of exploring social media vulnerabilities with regards to personal information and whether users of social media are aware of the risks of becoming a victim to fabricated profiles. The social media platform that this project will be focused on is Facebook.

The process will begin initially by looking into Facebook requirements which relate to profile creation and what content Facebook allows users to upload. Furthermore, I will research previous studies relating to this topic. This will allow me to gain a general understanding into what is expected from my project in terms of outcomes and learning objectives. Throughout the investigation I will be working alongside candidates that have been selected from my questionnaire based on their answers and opinions provided.

The selected candidates' personal social media account will be screened, searching for information that increases risk to fabricated profiles. Examples of information that adds risk to a profile include; providing locations via geotagging, pet names, child names and key life events. This information can be abused by an impersonator to evade security questions and to successfully acquire additional information which can cause further harm like fraud and blackmailing. These risks will be measured and combined to provide an overall risk for the chosen profile. Different age groups and genders will be examined to ensure fair results.

This research aims to highlight the awareness that the user has to the volume of personal information openly accessible via the internet on a chosen individual, the awareness they have in terms of the variety of information that can increase vulnerability to their profile, and what age group is most at risk. On the assumption that users are unaware of the risk of fabricated profiles, I will further investigate solutions that can be implemented to increase awareness and decrease the accessibility of personal information.

Project Aims and Objectives

1. Carry out research on fabricated profiles and the vulnerabilities that social media users possess. These vulnerabilities will include how widely accessible personal information is and the threats that can occur once information has been stolen.
2. An investigation into the users awareness of fabricated profiles, attitudes towards this issue and whether users feel at risk to becoming a victim. Furthermore, whether people are aware of the volume of personal information available online.
3. To successfully implement a measured risk assessment on a variety of social media profiles. This will be executed by scoring key words and phrases based on the possible involvement and threat that can be used against the user in question.

4. An additional investigation into the candidates attitudes once they have been presented with the finalised personal risk assessment. This will discover any changes in attitudes and whether additional precautions will be considered when uploading social media content.
5. A comparison between attitudes of social media users before and after the results were shown to them, to show whether the results have affected their awareness on fabricated profiles.
6. To provide a conclusive study to determine which age group is most at risk. This will be calculated by using the measured risk assessment.
7. Outline controls that can be implemented to increase the awareness of fabricated profile, therefore reducing vulnerabilities.

Ethical Issues

My investigation will involve myself handling personal data on a chosen individual. This could be viewed as unethical and may create issues for this project. I will ensure that all candidates are above the age of 18 and I have sufficient permission to screen their personal profiles. I will only use information that is relevant to the project. When carrying out my project, I will be proactive in informing the candidate of any actions I have taken.

Work Plan

Continuous Work throughout the Project

1. Progress meetings with supervisor (Once a week)
2. Carry out further research on this topic throughout to continually deepen my knowledge in this field.

Week 1 - Commencing 25th January 2016

- I. **Develop** Initial Plan

Deliverables - Initial Plan

Week 2 - Commencing 1st February 2016

- I. **Research** Facebook terms and conditions for policies on uploading content to their service, and any steps taken by Facebook to educate users on the accessibility of personal information.
- II. Undertake research on popular words and phrases used to complete personal account security, types of threat depending on what user information has been retrieved.
- III. **Research** previous studies on events that have occurred as a result of a fabricated profile and highlight significant information which will help my project develop.

Deliverables - Written report of my findings collected from the research stated above.

Week 3 - Commencing 8th February 2016

- I. **Develop** questionnaire for an initial survey to discover current attitudes towards fabricated profiles, whether Facebook users are taking preventative measure to ensure their information is not openly accessible.
- II. **Evaluate** questionnaire to discover if the objectives and goals of the questionnaire will be achieved.
- III. **Distribute** Questionnaire

Deliverables- First Questionnaire -

Week 4 - Commencing 15th February 2016

- I. **Develop** Initial Prototype for the measured risk assessment. Provide value to words and phrases based on previous studies and current research undertaken by myself.
- II. **Finalise** word and phrase valuation and create boundaries for concluding whether a profile is under risk or not.
- III. Wait on the questionnaire results

Deliverables- Completed model to determine the level of threat to a profile providing full justification.

Week 5 - Commencing 22nd February 2016

- I. **Collect** first questionnaire results and write up findings.
- II. **Select** appropriate subjects to further my research and ensure that I have gained the appropriate permissions.
- III. **Start** screening subject profiles and measure the overall threat by implementing my developed risk assessment model.

Deliverables- Write up findings from questionnaire and initial findings on user attitudes and awareness of this topic.

Week 6 - Commencing 29th February 2016

- I. **Continue** screening profiles
- II. **Develop** a set of interview questions to present to subjects once screening has been completed.
- III. **Evaluate** questionnaire and conclude whether it will help me distinguish if attitudes and awareness have been changed as a result of my studies.

Deliverables- Set of interview questions.

Week 7 - Commencing 7th March 2016

- I. **Complete** Screening and present findings to the appropriate subjects.
- II. **Interview** subjects.
- III. **Compare and Evaluate** results to initial questionnaire to see whether attitudes have changed.

Deliverables- Write up of interview results, Write up the changes in attitudes.

Week 8 - Commencing 14th March 2016

- I. **Continue** final report writing
- II. **Evaluate** my overall findings
- III. **Start** work on controls that can be implemented by Facebook to increase the awareness of fabricated profile.

Deliverables- Reflections on my research results, ideas that Facebook can implement to increase awareness and to reduce the use of highlighted words and phrases that give users increased threats.

Week 9 - Easter Holiday - Commencing 21st March 2016

- I. **Present** prototype examples that Facebook could implement to social media users and collect opinions on whether the ideas would be beneficial and would generate awareness.
- II. **Write** up results of opinions gathered
- III. **Start** evaluating project and write conclusions and reflections which would help with future studies.

Deliverables - Continued work on report, additional research data evaluated.

Week 10 / Week 11 - 11th - 18th April 2016

- I. **Finish** report and proof read through project to ensure quality and standards are reached.

Deliverables - First Draft

Week 12 - Commencing 25th April 2016

- I. **Finalise report**

Week 13 - Commencing 2nd May 2016

Deliverables - Completed Report and Submission