HSLU | Hochschule Luzern

Playing to defeat hackers: New game to raise employee awareness

There is an ever increasing number of hacker attacks on Swiss companies, becoming more professional all the time. It is therefore vital for employees to remain particularly alert. To better prepare them for attacks, IT specialists at the University of Lucerne have cooperated with Fabula Games in developing a free online game for companies.

Crime on the Internet is on the rise. "Ransomware attacks" are one of the offences regularly making headlines: Hackers use malware to remove and encrypt company data. They then ask for high sums of ransom money to decrypt them – and if you don't pay, your stolen data might just end up in the public domain.

The increasing risks of such attacks are also perceived by the cyber security experts of the University of Lucerne (HSLU). They have therefore cooperated with the designers at Fabula Games in developing a free online-game with the aim of raising company employee awareness. It is available free of charge on the "eBanking – but secure!" (EBAS) information platform, provided free-of-charge as a service for banks and companies by HSLU.

"Humans provide the biggest gateway for attacks"
Oliver Hirschi, lecturer at the HSLU IT department and co-developer of the game, explains: "Humans provide the biggest gateway for ransomware attacks, and that is one of the aspects where we have to start." It is so easy to click a link in a seemingly trustworthy e-mail; to open an attachment; to visit a faked website. This gateway then enables criminals to obtain confidential data or install dangerous software on a device. "Nowadays, such attacks are undertaken in a very professional manner – and to recognise them is becoming an ever larger challenge. Employees therefore need to be better sensitised and trained in this regard", Hirschi says.

Playing for better protection
Hirschi and his team deliberately decided to use an interactive approach instead of a straightforward information campaign. The game presents you with a seemingly everyday situation at the office – only for you to then become the target of cyber-criminals. The aim is to recognise the ransomware attack as quickly as possible and react accordingly. Players have the option to make various decisions in the game. If you successfully click your way through the tasks, you receive a personal assessment and further information all around the topic of protecting yourself against hacker attacks at the end of the game. Companies are free to use this game as they choose and integrate it into their awareness campaigns.

Contact details for media representatives:
Lucerne School of Computer Science and Information Technology
Oliver Hirschi, Lecturer and Head of EBAS
T +41 41 757 68 58 / oliver.hirschi@hslu.ch

About our EBAS services

The "eBanking – but secure!" website (www.ebas.ch/en) is a service provided by the University of Lucerne to over 40 partner financial institutions by now. This is where anyone interested can obtain up-to-date information on the topic of IT security with a particular focus on e-banking. In addition to our website, we also offer public courses for end customers and trainings for customer service employees working at a bank. In addition, EBAS regularly launches campaigns and awareness measures all around cyber-criminality to address the wider public.
www.ebas.ch/en