

13/10/2016



GIBRALTAR REGULATORY
AUTHORITY

2nd Floor, Eurotowers 4
1 Europort Road
Gibraltar

Tel: +350 20074636
Fax: +350 20072166
e-mail: info@gra.gi
url: <http://www.gra.gi>

PRESS RELEASE

DATA PROTECTION SURVEY SHOWS THAT VIRTUALLY ALL LOCAL STUDENTS USE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND 40% DO NOT USE PRIVACY CONTROLS

The Gibraltar Regulatory Authority, as the Data Protection Commissioner (the "Commissioner") undertook a survey on the use of Social Networking Sites ("SNS") and privacy amongst students from local schools for the third consecutive year. The key findings of the survey can be summarised as follows:

- 84% of Year 7 students use SNS;
- Virtually all local students over 11 use SNS and 74% use them daily;
- There has been an improvement in privacy practices amongst Year 9 students;
- 40% of all students hardly ever, or never, use appropriate privacy controls;
- Risks to privacy arise from the unauthorised disclosure and interception of photographs;
- 1 in 5 students reveal information about others without their consent;
- 93% of all students use access controls on their mobile phones;
- Students decrease their use of privacy controls when using SNS the older they get and;
- Students aged 17 and over from the Gibraltar College are the least secure when using SNS and locking mobile devices.

The survey shows that virtually all students over the age of 11 use at least one SNS. However, it is worrying that 40% hardly ever, or never, use the privacy controls available to them, a statistic which is 3% higher than last year.

The Commissioner's school survey is part of his Control Your Privacy Campaign and is carried out with the co-operation of the Department of Education. The survey included Year 7 students from all middle schools and the Loreto Convent. Also surveyed were Year 9 students from Loreto Convent and Bayside School, Year 11 students from Bayside School and Westside School, and students aged 15 and over from the Gibraltar College.

The survey comprised of 833 students, consisting of 541 boys and 292 girls, with most being between the ages of 11 and 18, and a minority being over 18.

The purpose of the survey was to obtain an understanding of the extent of use of SNS amongst local students between the ages of 11 and 18. Additionally, the survey also served to learn about the habits of these students with regards to SNS, in particular, which SNS are being used, the reasons and frequency of use, and the extent to which available privacy controls are being used. Finally, the survey also enabled the Commissioner to establish the extent to which the students using mobile devices, use available security features such as a password or PIN.



RESULTS

Notwithstanding some differences, the Commissioner notes that this year's results are largely similar to those of last year's survey, notably:

- virtually all the students surveyed use at least one SNS;
- three quarters of the students use SNS every day, in particular to message friends;
- approximately 4 out of 10 students (last year the figure was 37% and this year 40%) hardly ever, or never use the privacy controls. To be specific, 27% never use the privacy controls (last year it was 25%), whereas 13% hardly ever use them (last year it was 12%); and
- approximately three quarters of students use SNS that are specifically designed for the exchange of photographs and little else.

One notable difference in this year's results compared to last year, is a 13% drop in the use of SNS by Year 7 students (aged 10-11). Last year 97% of Year 7 students were found to use SNS, whilst this year the figure was 84%. This drop is considered an improvement, however the use of SNS remains very high amongst Year 7 students, which is of concern as it shows a disregard of the age restrictions imposed by SNS. As a result, a high number of Year 7 students are using SNS that are not designed for their age group; certainly for the 3 most popular SNS used by the Year 7 students, the minimum age for use is 13 (i.e. WhatsApp, Skype, and Snapchat).

Specifically in respect of SNS that are designed for the exchange of photographs, it is important to note that in every exchange of photographs, there is an element of risk as regards unauthorised disclosure to a third party, interception by hackers, or the photograph being used maliciously in the future.

It is important to note that the students surveyed, namely between the ages of 11 and 18, represent the majority of students in Gibraltar over the age of 11, as most students over 18 proceed to further develop their studies abroad. Thereby, the results provide a strong indication of the use of new technologies by all students in Gibraltar as from the age of 11.

In view of the results, the Commissioner reaffirms the need to continue promoting and emphasising the significance of the safe and responsible use of personal information in SNS.

The Commissioner's office is at the public's disposal should anyone wish to discuss matters which affect their privacy or feel that their data protection rights are not being correctly addressed.

For further information please contact the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority on +350 20074636 or email privacy@gra.gi.

Extract of survey results

