

15/06/2017



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PRESS RELEASE

DATA PROTECTION SURVEY SHOWS THAT VIRTUALLY ALL LOCAL STUDENTS USE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES BUT ONLY 41% ALWAYS 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 fourth consecutive year. The key findings of the survey can be summarised as follows:

- Virtually all local students surveyed use SNS and three quarters use them daily;
- 41% of all students always use appropriate privacy controls when using SNS;
- Risks to privacy arise from the unauthorised disclosure and interception of photographs;
- 17% of students always or regularly reveal information about others without consent;
- 93% of all students use access controls on their mobile phones;
- Students increase their use of SNS the older they get;
- There has been an improvement in privacy practices amongst Year 11 students;
- 91% of Year 7 students use SNS; and
- Year 7 Students are the least secure when using security features and locking their mobile devices.

The survey shows that virtually all students over the age of 11 use at least one SNS. However, it is worrying that only 41% of them always use the privacy controls available to them.

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 8 students from Prior Park School, Year 9 students from Bayside School and Year 11 students from Bayside School and Westside School.

The survey comprised of 818 students, consisting of 532 boys and 286 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; and
- Approximately three quarters of students use SNS that are specifically designed for the exchange of photographs and little else.

A concerning aspect of this year's results is that despite the general high level of awareness of security features on mobile phones, the Year 7 students (aged 10-11) are the least secure in relation to the use of security features and the locking of their devices. This is a significant cause for concern, particularly given the young age of the Year 7 students and the accessibility of many SNS on the mobile devices.

It is particularly concerning given that Snapchat is the joint most popular application amongst Year 7 students. In respect of SNS like Snapchat, 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 available 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.

