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PRESS RELEASE

THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER PUBLISHES THE RESULTS OF HIS 2017/18 PRIVACY AWARENESS SURVEY IN SCHOOLS ALONGSIDE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY

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

1. Virtually all students use SNS including 92% of Year 7 students.
2. SNS is used mostly for private messaging and its use grows as students get older.
3. Use of SNS to post images or comments by Year 7 and Year 9 students is decreasing.
4. There has been a marginal improvement in the use of privacy controls by the students with Year 11 students using privacy controls the most. Although a third still do not use controls regularly.
5. There is an increased risk to privacy from 'media rich' SNS.
6. Three quarters of students reveal information about others without their consent.
7. Students are increasingly using security features such as a PIN to protect access to their mobile devices, with Year 11 students being the most secure.

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 Prior Park School, Year 11 students from Bayside School and Westside School, and students aged 17 and over from the Gibraltar College.

The survey comprised of 841 students, consisting of 481 boys and 360 girls, with most being between the ages of 11 and 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

This year's results, including their analysis alongside survey results in previous years, has identified some positive developments. For example –

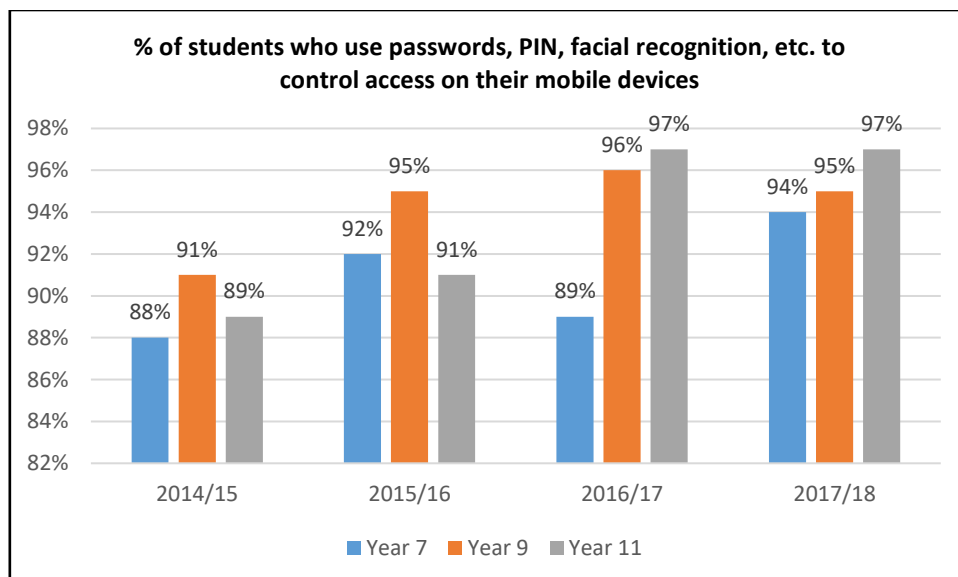
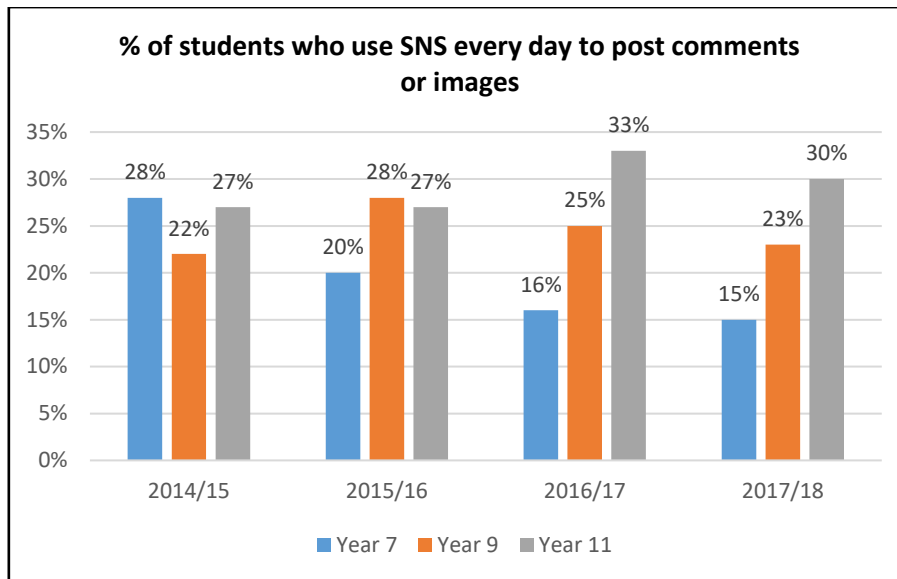
- the use of SNS to post images/comments has been decreasing amongst the younger students;
- the use of privacy controls by the students, although marginal, has increased; and,
- the use of security features on mobile devices such as a PIN to protect access to the device has increased.

Notwithstanding the positive developments above, concerns still remain, such as the use of SNS by Year 7 students and the low use of privacy controls by a third of the students. Further, the continuous and increasing use of SNS demands that continuous efforts are made in relation to raising privacy awareness.

The Commissioner welcomes the improvements in privacy practices but believes that it is appropriate and necessary to continue monitoring the user habits of new technologies including SNS amongst young persons, and promoting the safe use of SNS and mobile devices.

The full report is available at <https://www.gra.gi/data-protection-survey-shows-slight-progress-in-privacy-awareness-amongst-students-but-further-improvements-are-necessary>

Extract of survey results.



EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY

As part of his initiative to raise awareness about privacy and data protection, the Commissioner has developed educational resources, that teachers can use to educate students on privacy and data protection. Two packs have been developed – one for middle schools and one for secondary schools, however teachers may adapt and use the resources in each pack across different age groups should they consider it appropriate and/or useful.

The lesson plans integrate into Gibraltar’s ‘privacy awareness regime’ an International Framework, which was developed by an international working group on digital education that the Commissioner forms part of. The framework was adopted globally by the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners.

Going forward, the Commissioner aims to use these new resources in his engagement with schools.

The educational resources are available at <https://www.gra.gi/dataprotection/public-awareness/resources-for-teachers>

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.