

Case 3: Technical Security Analysis for Small Businesses

Nearly all small businesses today make use of technology; however, many business owners are not tech savvy. For example, small businesses such as moving companies, hair salons, tailors, cleaners, builders, etc., may not provide work which has a technical component, but must manage bookings, communication, and often finance using technology. Often this technology is using a mobile or personal computer and is managed by the business owner. Some businesses have the funds to hire tech help, but many do not. This case focuses on “an interactive assistant to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Switzerland without dedicated IT support, to assess security risks and provide resulting guidance.”

Technology security threats such as phishing, various forms of hacking, social engineering, viruses, and malware can have devastating effects on small businesses, particularly if the business owners and managers do not well understand these threats. The business owners can lose data, customer information, and business. They could be legally liable based on recent regulation.

We aim to create an app or a website to help small businesses consider security threats. The site/app could assess their situation and use of technology and make suggestions. It could provide information and recommendation. However, the technology awareness of users may vary from low to high, and the trust of users in the site/app is an issue. Business owners are reluctant to provide direct access to their systems, and such access may in itself create security issues. Privacy, time pressures and liability are all considerations.

The site/app can be general for many small businesses and technology levels, or could be more focused. It could be global or more local. Make your scope and focus clear as part of your case exploration.