

1208 Reading

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1 Topic

Investigating the Computer Security Practice and Needs of Journalists

2 Summary

This research studies the gap between the computer security practices and needs of journalists, the main reason that security tools often fail is due to usability issues and interference with the journalistic processes. Key findings highlight the source-driven communications, particularly when the sources are on the other side of a "digital divide"; easier-to-use tool; the need of authenticating sources, which is especially difficult on anonymous communication and the "first contact" problem, the role of organizations in shaping security behavior; some needs unfulfilled by existing technology. Finally, it gives some recommendation for the computer security community, including first contact and authentication, metadata protection, focusing on sources, knowledge management and understanding the journalistic process.

3 Findings of Research Suitable for NPO

1. Usability of security tools

People in NPO usually are neither expert at security, and organization may also restrict individual to adopt security practices. So it needs education about these issues, easier-to-use tools to increase the adoption.

2. Technical Interference with Workflow

NPO often prioritizes operational efficiency over high-level security, so tools that complicate workflows or require additional steps to verify data security may hinder their business.

4 Findings of Research Unsuitable for NPO

1. Unique journalistic threat models

Unlike journalist, NPO may not require either strong authentication or source anonymity on their work.

2. Reliance on Cloud Independence

While journalists may avoid cloud storage due to security concerns, many NPOs depend on cloud platforms for their cost-effectiveness and scalability.

5 Thoughts

It is common that the threat models of different situation and target are often quite different too, and it's best practice usually has some discrepancy from what security experts were expected. After having interview with NPO in person, I have realized that we need to communicate with them to comprehensively understand their problem and need.