

Rules of the Internet Road (The need for security awareness)

It's sophomore year in high school and you've just walked out of the DMV as the proud recipient of your legal right to operate a motor vehicle. You drive down the road with the confidence of someone with a driving record years beyond your own. Why do other drivers trust that you will do your part to keep our primary mode of travel in this country safe? The answer is that you have auto insurance, you've studied your state's "Rules of the Road" (or your state or country equivalent) and passed, if not the first time, a written and practical (driving) test granting you that privilege.

So how come we grant access to anyone willing to pay \$19.95 a month access to the Internet? I am not advocating that we need to consider any such rigor for the privilege to access this global electronic community. What I am saying is, like the physical world, the virtual world of the Internet has mostly good citizens but also has its share of under informed citizens as well as a few that are just up to no good. It is my job to help coordinate technology security for the University. But how do we help those possibly lacking enough knowledge to help themselves?

Like an infant learning to interact with her physical world, virtual citizens need to learn to interact properly with their virtual world. Whether you call it Net Etiquette or something else the Internet community does a reasonable job of policing itself (otherwise a concept like Wikipedia would never work). After all, the Internet was built on a premise of trust. It is growing abuse, by the few, of this model of trust that makes it imperative that we make a concerted effort to reach out to awaken a desire within the community to help themselves and indirectly help the rest of us on this shared information super highway.