interfuture
BUSINESS **IT** SECURITY

Interfuture Security News

As we come to the end of August, many will be coming back from holidays and getting ready to return to work: we hope you had a fantastic time off if you took any!

To gently get you back into the swing of things, we've got some cyber security stories for you, one covering a big news story from earlier in the year, the other focusing on vulnerable people and how we can help them to stay safe online.

As always, any feedback or queries please contact us via our website or social media.

Key Point

Obviously, this is a sweeping generalisation: there are plenty of older and younger people who are incredibly knowledgeable in cyber security and could probably teach me how to improve my resilience!

In general though, many in these demographics lack the same awareness, which can put them at risk.

Security Side By Side

What groups are most vulnerable to cyber attacks and what can we do to protect them?

People over the age of 75 are 4.25 times more likely to suffer a financial loss from online criminal activities than younger users are. As many of them are less experienced at being on the internet, phishing, social engineering, and identity theft are all bigger risks.

Younger people are almost too online literate, with 89% of 10 to 15 year olds using the internet at least once a day. Because of this, 17% of this demographic have spoken to someone online they had never met in person and 5% met up with someone they only knew online, putting them at risk of serious crimes.

To help older people, try to raise awareness: they don't know what they don't know. Talk to them about the dangers they may find online and try to help them to set up security measures. Also, encourage them to be open if they are victim to an attack.

For children, education is the most important thing. They will always be able to get online if they want to, so getting them to understand the risks and how to deal with inappropriate behaviour online is the most effective deterrent.

Hacking: not my cup of Tea

An app designed to make dating safer for women may have just put them at risk: how did the breach happen?

The **Tea** app, based in the US, was created in 2023 with the goal of reducing the risks of online dating for women. With other women posting reviews of men they had dated, access to background checks and reverse image searches and tools used to detect fake profiles, **Tea** was used by many to make dating safer.

Though there is a wider discussion to be had around the ethics of such an app, we are interested instead in the massive data leak that occurred recently. According to various publications,* 72,000 user images were exposed, including 13,000 ID verification photos (so selfies, driver's licenses, passports and 59,000 public and private images from posts and messages).

Due to a misconfigured database – a very common issue with cloud services – this information was breached and shared online. The data came from an archived version of the app, meaning only those who joined before February 2024 were impacted, but that still resulted in a lot of identities and information being leaked. Data was poorly handled: it was kept alongside public content, and archived data wasn't properly isolated or encrypted, making it easy to access. Users weren't clearly informed about the risks of having data archived on the site, highlighting the need for transparent data retention policies.

Ultimately, **Tea** has broken trust with their users. The app promised a safe space to talk to others about potentially dangerous individuals, but now their details are publicly available, increasing the risk of doxxing, stalking or harassment.

So, what can we learn? Data minimisation and encryption should be the baseline for protecting online data, and cloud services need to be configured carefully and correctly. It is yet to be seen if **Tea** will recover from the bad press the hack has encouraged, but with the loss of user trust, it may never be seen as a safe environment again.

Me, Me, Media

Why not take a look at our social media channels? We publish new content every weekday with blogs, videos, guides and other useful things, all designed to keep you informed and entertained - see what you think and consider giving us a follow!

Check out Interfuture Security's social media (or leave a review here)

⭐ ⭐ ⭐ ⭐ ⭐