STUDYING JOURNALISTS AND THEIR SOURCES TO ENSURE USABLE AND SECURE COMMUNICATION

presented by

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Abstract:
While journalists are often considered likely users and beneficiaries of secure communication and data storage tools, their practices have not been studied in depth by the academic computer security community. Our research aims to close this gap by identifying both technical and training interventions that can improve security in journalism. To achieve this goal, we conducted both qualitative and quantitative studies to explore the security perception and practices of journalists and their sources. The findings from these studies point to the importance of developing security training targeted at journalists. We evaluated the existing online security training modules for journalists and found that none of them adheres to learning science principles. Thus, in the next phase of our research, we focused on developing new training materials that adhere to learning science principles and exploits the professional motivation of journalists. We gathered primary feedback from usable security experts on the usability of our training. We plan to continue this work by evaluating the efficacy of our training in terms of knowledge acquisition and retention with student-and professional journalists.

Bio:
Dr. Mahdi Nasrullah Al-Ameen is a Post-doctoral Fellow and Assistant Director of Humans and Technology Laboratory (HATLab) at Clemson University. His primary research interests are at the intersection of Cyber Security, Online Privacy, and Human-centered Computing, in an area known as Usable Security and Privacy. His research focuses on designing novel security system to provide resilience against cyberattacks, and evaluates its usability through human-subject studies. His work also explores the security perception and practices of people, and leverages that knowledge in developing new security strategies tailored to the needs of the users from different ages, backgrounds, and professions. Dr. Al-Ameen completed his PhD from the University of Texas at Arlington, winning `Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award’ for his research on Usable Security.