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Article Review #2: Reviewing “Privacy threats in intimate relationships” and its connections to social science

In this article, the authors Karen Levy and Bruce Schneier describe what intimate relationships are and how they affect a person’s cybersecurity and privacy.

Connection to Social Sciences

This article connects to the social sciences via the principles of determinism and relativism. This connection can be made by the links the authors make between intimate threats and monitoring significant others during relationships. As mentioned by the authors, there are many factors that can motivate an intimate threat to cause problems to a person’s cybersecurity like knowledge or control in a relationship (Levy & Schneier, 2020). This can show determinism as preceding events like seeking knowledge of a partner can lead to harm to the person’s cybersecurity as well as their privacy; and it relates to relativism by showing that events like the ones mentioned are related to an intimate threat’s actions. Another social science that is connected to this article is the principle of objectivity. This is shown in this quote said by the authors “While many of the threats we have described here are technically unsophisticated, we should not misread this as an indication that they are easy to solve” (Levy & Schneier, 2020). This quote helps to show that in the authors efforts to answer their questions, they are doing it in a manner that does not discriminate nor shows an opinion from them.

Research Questions and Methods

In this article, the authors wanted to answer two questions that they had that relate to intimate threats. As mentioned in the article,

Our first goal, then, is to describe intimate threats as a class of privacy problems, drawing out the features that characterize the category...Our second goal is to articulate a set of design considerations that is cognizant of intimate threats (Levy & Schneier, 2020).

Based off of the quotes, the main research method that I found in the article was the use of thematic analysis. This is shown in the article by how the authors are trying to find characteristics of intimate threats.

Types of Data and Analysis Done

In this article, there was no type of quantitative data obtained. Rather, the goal was to find qualities of intimate threats. As mentioned in the “Research Questions and Methods” section above, the authors used thematic analysis and qualitative data to explain the characteristics of intimate threats and how they affect cybersecurity.

Connection to the Course

This article is connected to the course in many different ways. Two concepts shown in the article are human factors and behavioral theories. This is shown by the authors mentioning that emotions like obsession, deep love, or jealousy can cause an intimate threat (Levy & Schneier, 2020). This helps to show that human factors like emotions can cause a person to invade a person’s privacy as well as show that people like family or peers can influence mistrust in a significant other. Another two concepts from the course shown in the article are social systems

and social forces. These concepts connect to the article as it can show where the people creating intimate threats may have gained their motivation from. As mentioned above, people can learn their behaviors from people like their family and peers as well as learn them from places like peer networks and religious groups in terms of social system; and from places like social media and politics in terms of Social Forces.

Connections to Marginalized Groups

One way this article connects to marginalized groups is by discussing how minority groups are more likely to face violence from their intimate partner. As said by Karen Levy and Bruce Schneier, “Perhaps the most alarming example of privacy invasion in a romantic relationship is in the case of intimate partner violence and abuse. Nearly one in three women and one in six men will experience abuse at some point over the course of their lives.” This statistic shows how dangerous imitating threats are not only to a person’s cybersecurity, but also the safety of the person in general.

Contributions of this Article

Two main contributions of the entire article are that people need to understand the threat that intimate threats bring to their cybersecurity and help empower said people to create boundaries to protect themselves. The authors mention that at certain times, observing someone is bound to happen and due to this, people need to set up ways that allow for monitoring, but do not expose a person to possible cyber threats (Levy & Schneier, 2020). By empowering people to implement these boundaries and procedures of trust, it can help both parties to feel more secure in both their relationships and their cybersecurity.

Conclusion

Overall, this article helps to demonstrate the importance of finding intimate threats in relationships and how properly combat and mitigate them. By using the finding and recommendations that Karen Levy and Bruce Schneier present in their work, it can help cybersecurity experts understand how certain cybersecurity issues are created by people who are close to them and how they can begin to work and resolve these issues.

Citation

Levy, K., & Schneier, B. (2020). Privacy threats in intimate relationships. *Journal of Cybersecurity*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/cybsec/tyaa006>

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