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Research Proposal

Problem/Context

The world is constantly evolving and we as young people are adapting naturally; whereas, the elderly are having a harder time adjusting as they are still not used to this digital age world. With practically everything being moved from paper to digital, the elderly are having to work twice as hard to keep up with our growing society. The baby boomers and some generation x are having to learn and rely on their grandchildren for anything involving technology. This makes them vulnerable and a perfect target for hackers, especially when it comes to phishing schemes. The elderly are a prime target for cybercriminals as they are inclined to give out their personal information over the phone especially since many of them have not been educated on cybersecurity.

Therefore, the problem is the elderly not having the knowledge of internet safety. For instance, the elderly are vulnerable to scams such as those offering low cost insurance and discount drugs. Some of the reasons why the elderly are vulnerable to online scams are that they lack computer skills and are too trusting. When it comes to their lack of computer skills, this refers to them not having security on their computers such as firewalls, secure passwords, automatic updates for software, etc. Next, the elderly are too trusting when it comes to material that looks official since they do not know the signs of an online scam. There are many sites in which the elderly can be vulnerable such as on social media (i.e. Facebook) and online dating apps.

Solution

In order to solve this problem, my group and I came up with the idea of creating a cybersecurity awareness course for the elderly because they fall victim to different cyber-attacks such as phishing and identity theft. We are going to offer this course through a website in which the elderly can learn about various cybersecurity risks. One of the main objectives within this course is to provide the elderly with a positive and comfortable online learning environment where they will feel motivated and encouraged to protect themselves on the internet. The cybersecurity awareness course will also be offered to companies.

It is going to be a one-time purchase for the elderly as they may forget to pay if it was subscription based. However, for other companies, we will offer a subscription service. We have not discussed pricing as that will be decided later on as we progress with this project. For this project, we will need a website for the elderly as well as companies to access the courses. In addition, we will need to set up different payment options for the courses. Furthermore, we will need to create these courses in order to bring these ideas to life. For the courses, they are going to be video lectures that will engage the elderly and each lecture will discuss a different topic.

At the end of each lecture, there will be a review quiz or questionnaire at the end that reiterates what they have learned. They are going to be basic lectures that are broken up into units so that

the content builds with each unit. In unit 1, we will start with the basics including video topics, such as how to create passwords and how to navigate throughout a website safely, defining basic cybercrimes. We will begin the course by giving them a reason why they are prime targets within cyber-attacks and internet safety tips. Then, as the elderly progress within the course, they will move on to learn about how they can detect phishing scams among other things. Overall, we want to ease the elderly into this content as it can be overwhelming for them if they were to hear this information all at once.

Instead, we want to ensure that the elderly get the most out of this course as it is meant to be beneficial to them. At the end of the course, they will receive a certificate of completion that they can have for their records and as a way for us to show our appreciation for them for taking the time to take our course.

Barriers

One of the barriers that we might encounter within this project is not having enough knowledge of entrepreneurship as this is the first assignment that I actually get to start a business that will help people. As technology advances, we will update these courses as needed. Another barrier that we might expect to confront when creating this course is competition. There are many cybersecurity awareness programs out there that have been successful, so we will have to be mindful of that and come up with ways that will make us stand out from our competition. Lastly, we will need to find ways to advertise these courses for elderly which will be difficult since everything is on social media and many of the elderly don't use it. We will have to come up with other ways to get the information out to them such as through commercials.

Assessment

We will know that we are successful with our course when we read the reviews from the elderly that leave testimonials about how our course changed their life and helped them be more knowledgeable of their security on the internet. There will be an option once they complete the course for them to fill out a survey based on the overall structure which will help us learn and improve the course for those in the future. Also, we will know when we start seeing the progress of our course grow financially. Since companies are going to have the option of utilizing our course, they can influence other companies to use it as well, leading to sponsorship deals and much more. Furthermore, the elderly who do decide to take our cyber security awareness course, will hopefully find the information fundamental and will encourage their senior friends and family to take it as well.