

AWARENESS SG GROUP SURVEY REPORT SUMMARY

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1. Introduction

Cyber security is a dynamic and evolving area that impacts individuals and institutions as well as governments and commercial enterprises at all levels. Cyber threats ranging from cybercrime to cyber espionage are a growing concern for governments and commercial enterprises in all sectors. Most of us have known this for quite some time. What is new, different, and exciting today is the growth of awareness in this field, which reflects the idea of how we could do something other than technical work about these evolving threats and risks. There are positive signs that cyber security is improving in many countries, organisations, and institutions in the GCC region (Dr.Hessa Al-Jaber, 2022).

We know that cybercriminals are persistent and driven, working all day, every day with no days off. Hence, we need to collectively come together with industry, academia, and government to promote the importance of a secure online environment and work together on awareness and education and build a culture of cyber defenders.

The youth of today are prone more than others to online threats because of the long hours they spend online, including gaming which has risen in popularity since the pandemic. This makes them more vulnerable to cybersecurity risks. This statement equally holds true for the elderly due to the lack of confidence in the way in which they use the internet- often with a tendency to share personal or private data that otherwise should be kept safe, or are under the ‘wrong,’ impression of how their children interact and engage with others online whilst gaming.

To address this issue, members of the Awareness Syndicate Group designed a questionnaire to survey responses on the behavioural practices of two target groups above the age of 19 years old: the elderly and online gamers. They then disseminated a survey to their networks on social media, including Plexal’s Portal, and collected the responses.

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2. Awareness Approach & Methodology

This report focuses on understanding the levels of cyber security awareness among the youth, especially gamers and the parents of gamers to better understand how they perceive to understand children's gaming habits and behaviour online.

We essentially started with two surveys: The first focused on Internet & Password Uses and Gaming from the perspective of parents. And the second was targeting gamers and parents of gamers between the age of 13-18 years across GCC countries.

Our objective was to inform the group's cybersecurity awareness campaign based on findings of the two surveys and subsequently write and develop the right content to resonate with our audience. We also leveraged content from ewaei.org and Get Safe Online - which basically provides diverse educational content from videos, messages, and procedures.

Promoting awareness and ensuring that the target audience will refer and use that material was the most challenging part. In addition to the above, we used external participation in international panels and campaigns to ensure the optimum outreach best marketing for cyber awareness.

This effort needs to be continuous and thus for sure with the upcoming cohort.

3. Methodology

The awareness Syndicate Group has considered two target audiences for the awareness campaign plan, elderly people, and gamers. We then agreed on choosing gamers as our main target audience for different reasons, as per the below:

1. *The community of gamers is believed to be a bigger community and more active in using the technology which could also help us get faster responses within the timeframe we had.*
2. *The gamers community also varies in the age group from kids to adults.*
3. *We also chose gamers because of the overconfidence they have in using the internet and technology, which could expose them to potential threats they might not have considered.*

After deciding on the target audience group, we started working on the method and tools we could use to build our survey. Survey questions were collectively developed by Syndicate Group members using Microsoft Forms and drawing on their own professional experience in cybersecurity. The survey was later shared on diverse platforms to increase response rates: The Cyber Oman Community Portal, and other social media channels like WICSME, WhatsApp, email and the LinkedIn account of UKODH Alumni Association.

As mentioned previously, we have built two surveys to understand the behaviour and the practices our target audience group apply in using the internet or and while gaming. The

main goal of the survey is to be able to understand and know the content we would need to prepare and translate with the collaboration with Gaming 4 Good Campaign, with the opportunity to use advice and tips provided by Get Safe Online who had previously run similar campaigns in other regions globally.

We used Microsoft Forms to create our survey because of the user friendliness of the platform in creating the survey as well as the analysis of the results is displayed in graphs which is very convenient to analyse the results.

There were three sources used to distribute the survey to as many people as we can. We got help from the UK Oman Digital Hub, WICSME and the UKGulfWIC emails list. The distribution was done through WhatsApp and Emails.

The questions in the first survey were 20 questions in total and they were divided into two parts, the first part focused on understanding the internet and password uses and the second part focused on gaming practices.

Later, the team created another survey that targets gamers aged (13-18) to further understand gamer's behaviour for that age group as well as for that this age group is assumed to be the most engaged with playing games and using the internet.

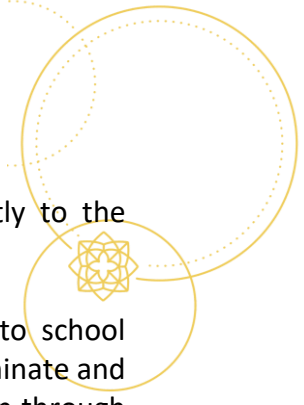
3.1 Design & Rollout of G4G Campaign Implementation

The Gaming 4 Good Campaign aims at raising parents' awareness of how their children can game safely online through crisp, concise, and easy to understand language and messaging. This was further informed by an article published in the National News of Saudi Arabia around the subject of UAE emerging as a key gaming market in the Middle East with plans to develop 30 games and 40,000 jobs by the end of the decade.¹ The results of the questionnaire served to inform campaign design around the subject of Gaming 4 Good and was implemented along the lines of Get Safe Online Gaming 4 Good Campaign (G4G) in English, and with their support.

It was launched in Arabic to address the elderly and online gamers simultaneously by developing a set of marketing collateral in the form of:

- a) A poster that could be printed in large size and displayed in school corridors. This contained advice around children's behaviour online drawing parents' attention to the fact that what they perceive to be true about children's gaming behaviour online is different from the reality. To address this, we listed a number of key points to advise them on how to track and monitor their children's behaviour online, for example, by encouraging them to play games they have chosen jointly with their children, to report on breaches, to play games with them, etc.

¹ <https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/2023/06/16/saudi-arabia-and-uae-emergine-as-key-middle-east-gaming-markets/>

- 
- b) It also included a mobile code and image for taking the reader directly to the information page on eWaei.org website and;
 - c) A letter template in which the fellows can personalise and send out to school principals in their own country, after which, we asked the fellows to disseminate and share that material with parents, school principals or friends on WhatsApp through dedicated parent groupings, or other and request, that they be shared by others as well to spread the word and pass on the message, or printed and displayed in school corridors, where feasible and convenient.
 - d) Fatumah and Saggour Animation Videos, a cartoon that tells the story of a school girl called fatumah who learns how to engage in safe online behaviour through her friend the falcon (Saggour)

The following countries participated in campaign rollout and dissemination:

Jordan

The marketing collateral was shared with Jordan's WiCSME affiliate Group, the majority of its members are cybersecurity professionals who then shared that material with others. This received positive reviews in the form of requests to collaborate and enquiry around the entity that develops this sort of material.

Oman, Muscat

The marketing collateral was shared across 2 schools in Muscat and 5 schools outside Muscat by Shaikha Al Mashaykhi. As well as, Eng. Shams Al Balushi shared to 8 WhatsApp groups which include mothers and teachers. Many of them were interested and wanted to distribute it as much as they could.

Qatar

Mouza shared the collateral with 3 principals of middle schools and one boy's school in addition to parents' groups at the State of Qatar. According to Mouza, she is receiving very encouraging reviews and is therefore capitalising on word of mouth to spread the news further, as parents' groups are very active and faster in sharing this collateral.

4. Survey Results

4.1 The key findings found for the first survey were as follows:

4.1.1 Internet & Password Uses Findings

- ✓ The results indicate that 91% of responders want to use the internet safely because 26% of responders reported a lack of confidence in using the internet and as a result exhibit practices that subject them to online harm due to using the same password

across more than one account and connecting it to them personally such as their name, or date of birth, name of spouse, etc.

This result indicates there is a lack of adequate resources or awareness materials regarding the internet safe use. To overcome the lack found in this survey, the next cohort could work on the relevant materials for the awareness campaign to help people be more confident in using the internet.

- ✓ 65% of those survey reported that they use passwords that are connected to them personally and 60% use the same password across more than one account. Users generally prefer using passwords connected to them personally and easy to remember. However, this raises the concern of being a target to social engineering attacks, which could lead to hacking accounts easily and potentially impersonations attacks.

If a gaming or social media account is hacked for instance, the user's information such as email address, phone number, bank card account, billing address, home address...etc can be stolen once the password is cracked. Which in return the email or social media accounts for the user could be hacked easily if the user uses the same password or a weak one in his/her gaming account which opens the door for the hacker to gain more information which could lead to blackmail, manipulate, bullying, impersonation (identity theft). Another possible risk could be impersonation of the email owner and sending phishing emails to the contacts.

We believe that raising an awareness on how to create a strong and safe password is necessary. A strong password such as one that has 8-14 characters and contains Upper- and lower-case letters, symbols and numbers.

4.1.2 Gaming Practices Findings

- ✓ 66% percent of those surveyed reported to have children that play games online and 50% indicated they play games with strangers.

While 50% of gamers play with strangers, there could be many potential threats putting into consideration the variety in age groups of gamers, for example kids could be playing with teens or adults in online games that have chat rooms and or voice chat which potentially could expose children to offensive language, social engineering attacks... etc. On the chat room for instance, malicious links or files could be shared among players and manipulators could built trust with other gamers and lead them to share photos or personal information (e.g., their own information, parents' cards, bank accounts ... etc) which in return could be used to blackmail or bully them.

- ✓ 92% of respondents were over the age of 19 years old, believing that considering their age and their exposure to the technology and internet they could be more aware

about the safe gaming and internet uses. However, we found that the majority share personal information such as name, location, age, job position, phone number...etc.

- ✓ 6% of respondents have shared personal information and it was used against them in online games.
- ✓ Many of the respondents have shared the same types of online games they prefer and like. The most popular games were as shown below:

1. **FIFA:** This is one of the best football games for boys where player movement and controls are more realistic to the real FIFA than any other games. Also, because it reflects real football and the most famous players with high scores.



2. **Call of Duty:** The Call of Duty series has successfully produced a line of outstanding shooter games. One of the things that players love about the franchise is its consistency. Players know what to expect from the series, and are rarely disappointed, so they go out and buy release after release.

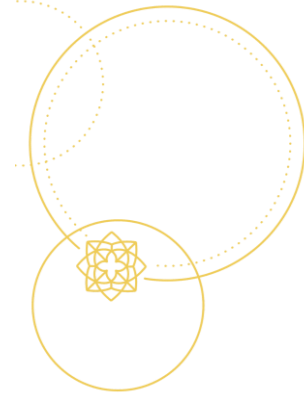


3. **RPG:** It stands for Role Playing Games, and is a game in which each participant assumes the role of a character, generally in a fantasy or science fiction setting, that can interact within the game's imaginary world. There are many RPG games but the most popular are: Fortnite, Star Wars, Roblox and Mass Effect.



4. **FPS:** It stands for First Person Shooting games, and typically maps the gamer's movements and provides a view of what an actual person would see and do in the game. Some types of these games may also be customizable, allowing the players to vary weapons, health and power-ups found on the map, as well as victory criteria. Games may allow players to choose between various classes, each with its own strengths, weaknesses, equipment and roles within a team.





4.2 The key findings found for the second survey (13-18 years old) were as follows:

- 77% play games online
- 51% play games occasionally
- 43% play games online for 1 - 3 hours
- 46% play with strangers occasionally
- 26% share their name as a personal data while gaming
- 35% use iPhone/Android when playing
- 100% doesn't share their password with other gamers
- 14% were bullied from others while gaming

Key insights from our surveys indicate that:

1. The majority of parents expressed concerns regarding the potential negative effects of online gaming on their children, such as excessive screen time, exposure to inappropriate content, and limited social interaction.
2. A significant number of parents have implemented various measures to address these concerns, including setting time limits for gaming, monitoring the content their children access, and encouraging open communication about online experiences.
3. Parents emphasized the importance of establishing trust and open dialogue with their children, educating them about online risks, and fostering responsible gaming habits.



5. Communication Plan

Based on the analysis of the survey, the team has come up with the awareness campaign communication to start distributing the relevant messages weekly as shown in the screenshot below.

No.	Objective (from Survey findings)	Ewaei Video	Marketing copy line	Publishing Date via whats app	Status
1	91% want to understand how to use internet more safely	About Us Ewaei video	Worried About using the internet? Help is here	14/02/2023	Completed
2	65% use the same password for more than one account	No.2 Top Tips if hacked	Have you or someone you know been hacked recently?	22/02/2023	Completed
3	60% have a password connected to them personally	IOT video	Does your password contain your name?	02/03/2023	Completed
4	66% have children that play games online	No.5 Ways to keep your kids safe	Do you know what games your children play on line?	09/03/2023	Completed
5	50% play games with strangers	No.10 Friendships online	Do you really know your online friends? Be careful about sharing personal information online.	16/03/2023	Completed
		No.6 Video chat & webcams			
6	42% regularly play games online	No.9 video – Downloading an APP	Are you playing your online game via an APP?	23/03/2023	Completed
7	26% not confident using internet (elders)	No.1 Online safety tips for Elders	Do you worry when using the internet?	27/02/2023	Completed
		No.14 About Twitch			

● Completed
 ● In progress
 ● Not started

Furthermore, the gaming collateral poster was translated to Arabic for it to be ready to be distributed through WhatsApp.

6. Calendar of Event

The awareness syndicate group along with the WICSME group have worked to add the calendar of events on the Ewaei.org portal. The Event data or publicity from WiCSME group was added to the portal's dashboard where it has information about the upcoming events related to cybersecurity such as conferences.

7. What's Next (Future Plan)

The awareness syndicate group aims to continue on enhancing content and promoting the Ewaei.org portal. As well as continue the awareness campaigns by distributing the relevant materials (e.g., videos, flyers.)

The following are some ideas are based on findings of survey research; I would like to propose the following actions:

1. **Awareness Campaign:** Develop an educational campaign aimed at raising awareness among parents about the potential risks of online gaming and providing guidance on creating a safe and balanced gaming environment for children. This may include podcasts, quizzes.
2. **Parental Guidelines:** Create a comprehensive set of guidelines that outline practical strategies for parents to ensure the safety and well-being of their children while they engage in online gaming activities.
3. **Collaboration with Education Institutions:** Establish partnerships with schools and educational institutions to incorporate digital safety awareness into their curriculum and provide guidance to parents on managing online gaming habits.
4. **Continuous Research:** Encourage further research to gain deeper insights into the evolving landscape of online gaming and its impact on children, to adapt our approach and strategies accordingly.

'Our aim is to empower parents with the knowledge and resources needed to protect their children from potential online gaming risks while fostering a healthy digital environment.'

8. Conclusion

We have understood the way in which the targeted groups think and how they deal with games as well as with the competitive gamers through distributing two questionnaires. The findings of the survey and questionnaires are contained in this report under section 4.

The conclusion of the survey denotes that what parents perceive to be true about their children's gaming habits is different from the reality and that the majority expressed the desire to navigate the internet safely.

A G4G campaign was therefore designed and disseminated in Arabic along the lines of Get Safe Online Campaign to enhance awareness and provide advice on how parents can best protect their children online while gaming.

The campaign received positive reviews from their surrounding environment to the extent that HSBC agreed to adopt and utilise the material through their *HSBC's mobile app that is targeting people throughout the region with awareness content in Arabic for how to stay safe online.*

-The End-

Appendix A

Gaming Survey Questionnaire 1

Internet & Password Uses

1. How often do you use the internet? [Daily, Rarely, Never]
2. Do you feel confident when using the internet [Yes, No]
3. Do you have internet access 24/7 at home? [Yes, No]
4. Would you like to understand how to use the internet more safely? [Yes, No]
5. What technology do you have? [iPhone or Android, Laptop, Desktop, Tablet, Other]
6. Please elaborate more if you selected (Other) for the previous question
7. Do you have the same password for more than one device or online account? [Yes, No]
8. Do you have a password that is connected to you personally? [Yes, No]
9. Do other people know your passwords? [Yes, No]

Gaming

10. Do you or any of your children play games online? [Yes, No]
11. How often do you/they play games? [Daily, Once or few times a week, Rarely]
12. When you or your children play games online, would you engage with people you have never met in person before?
[Yes, all the time, No never, Sometimes]
13. What personal data do you share while gaming? [Name, Location, Job Position, Age, Phone Number, Other]
14. Please elaborate more if you selected (Other) for the previous question
15. Have you shared any personal information and it was used against you in online games? [Yes, No]
16. What's your best or favorite online game? Why?
17. When you sign-up to play a game, are you asked for your personal information? [Yes, No]
18. How old are you? [Under 10 years old, 10-18 years old, 19-29 years old, 30 and above]
19. Do you/they prefer: [Solo games - offline , team games - online]
20. If you/they play with a team, do you know them ? [Yes, friends and family, Yes, random people, No I don't prefer to play with a team]



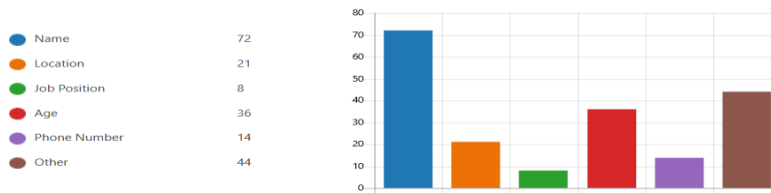
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Gaming Survey Questionnaire 2

(13-18 years old gamers)

1. Do you play games online? [Yes, No]
2. If you answered (Yes) to the previous question, please name the top 3 games that you play regularly.
3. How often do you play? [Occasionally, Daily, Weekly]
4. If you play daily, how long do you play for? [Less than an hour, 1-3 hours, More than 3 hours]
5. When gaming online, do you play with strangers? [Occasionally, Always, Never]
6. When gaming online, what personal data do you share? (Tick all that apply)
[Name, Location, Age, School, Phone Number, Other]
7. If you answered (Others) to the previous question, can you give an example?
8. What Technology do you use to game online?
[iPhone/Android, Laptop, Tablet, Desktop, Playstation or other similar games]
9. Do you share your password with other gamers? [Yes, No]
10. Have you ever been bullied while gaming? (e.g. being blocked from a game by other players) [Yes, No]

13. What personal data do you share while gaming? (Tick all that applies)



4. Would you like to understand how to use the internet more safely?

