Reactions to Internet Security Warnings: Personal versus University Computers

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Reactions to Internet Security Warnings: Personal versus University Computers

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Many organizations use computer security systems to protect their computers from viruses, intrusion, malware, and other hazards. Additional employees, computer security software, and employee training are time consuming and expensive. It would be beneficial to determine what could be implemented to promote behaviors among employees or students that help to increase computer security. The purpose of the present research is to determine if computer ownership plays a role in reactions to internet security pop-up warnings. University students are asked to bring their personally owned computers to the psychology lab to take a reading comprehension test. The participants are randomly assigned to use an institutional computer or their personal computer. They are told that they will be taking a reading comprehension test that is time sensitive. The researcher asks that they hold all questions until the end. The participants log into an internet web-site and begin. During the reading comprehension test, a pop-up internet security warning appears on their computer screen. The internet security pop-up is based on an actual security warning pop-up and on current research and recommendations for creation of successful security pop-up warnings. The reactions of the participants can be used to determine if any differences exist between reactions to internet security warnings on personally owned computers as opposed to institutionally owned computers. This knowledge impacts organizational policies regarding computer ownership in a way that saves the organization time and money.