

The ENISA Awareness Raising Community

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Abstract

This paper presents the ENISA Awareness Raising Community that aims at sharing and analysing information security good practices across Europe. The Community builds on a diverse range of skills and knowledge of ICTs, and differing interests and levels of expertise and priorities. Shared awareness practices have been deemed critical to the success of the Community. Leveraging upon the Community members can greatly enhance the way awareness raising activities evolve within private and public organisations when it comes to information security.

Keywords

AR Community, Awareness, ENISA

1. ENISA: influencing public behaviour and changing the mindset towards information security

The European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA) is an EU agency established to advance the functioning of the internal market. ENISA is a centre of excellence for the European Member States and European institutions in network and information security, giving advice and recommendations and acting as a switchboard for information on good practices. Moreover, the Agency facilitates contacts between the European institutions, Member States and private business and industry actors.

To this end, ENISA is engaged in positively influencing public behaviour towards information security, changing the mindset of the human element in order to achieve greater information security self-awareness.

2. The Awareness Raising Community: a success story

The Awareness Raising (AR) Community is a subscription-free community open to experts who have an interest in engaging in raising information security awareness within their organisations (see Figure 1). The AR Community was launched in February 2008 and is designed to engage with ENISA in its mission to foster a culture of information security.



Figure 1: Awareness Raising Community logo

As a point of contact for matters related to information security awareness, the AR Community has grown now to 45 nations, comprising 304 members. All European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA) countries are represented. The AR Community welcomes membership applications from any European or non-European country.

Though members have a diverse range of skills and knowledge of ICTs, and differing interests and levels of expertise and priorities, they are united in helping the AR Community become the intellectual backbone of the exchange of information security good practices. Thus, the establishment of the AR Community marks the beginning of a deep engagement not only with sharing but also with analysis of information security good practices across Europe.

3. History

ENISA began building an AR Community in late 2006. To enhance the capacity of such a Community, promote knowledge sharing and dialogue within Member States and stakeholders, ENISA created a new way of coming together and sharing information. Monthly conference calls were organised from March 2007 and were joined by about twenty participants from eight European countries: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

During 2007, following the positive feedback received by stakeholders and the common willingness to create a recognised and established information security awareness community, ENISA included the creation of such Community in the framework of the multi-thematic annual programme of the Agency.

Later in 2007, the work programme of ENISA was approved, thus laying the foundations of the AR Community.

Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vietnam joined in February 2008, followed by Egypt, Luxembourg, Morocco, New Zealand, and Turkey in April 2008, Australia, Latvia

and Cyprus in May 2008, Lithuania and Poland in June 2008 and Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Sierra Leone in July 2008.

4. Membership growth

Most of the AR community's population growth is due to a common recognition of the importance of information security awareness.

Recent events have raised concerns, leading private and public organisations to understand that policies and technologies must be put in place to secure sensitive corporate information. These controls have to ensure the ability to secure information on the network as well as the opportunity to manage data which enter and leave the company. While policies and technology are certainly a critical part of any information security programme, these measures alone cannot deliver sufficient information security in practice. Awareness of the related risks and available safeguards is the first line of defence for security. Employees are the real perimeter of the organisation's network and their behaviour is a vital aspect of the total security picture.

Moreover, the good work of the AR Community members and its recognition has attracted considerable interest and attention of other experts.

As shown in Figure 2, the AR Community counts 304 members, with an increase of 89% from October 2008.

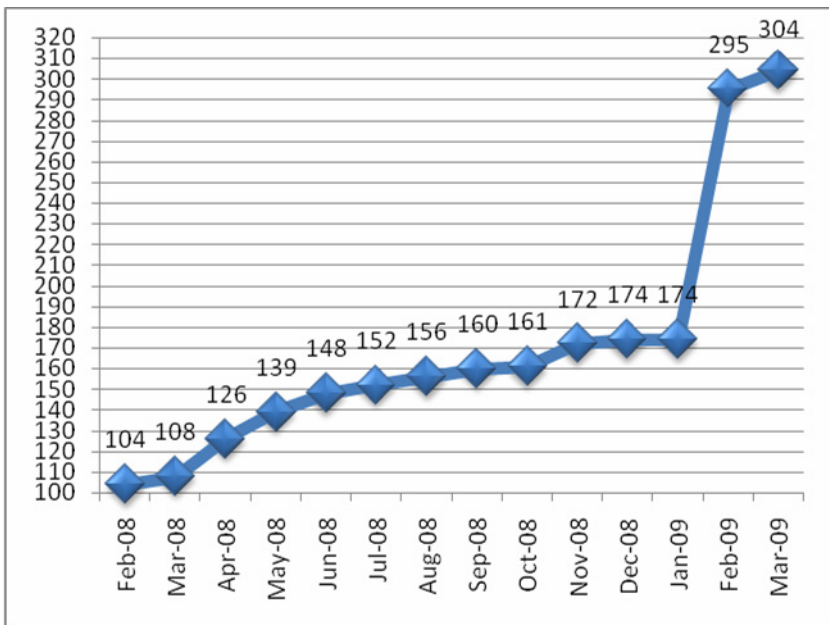


Figure 2: AR Community membership growth

The AR Community covers five continents – Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania – and a large number of countries. The largest membership is from Europe.

5. Members at work

Though members have a diverse range of skills and knowledge of ICTs, and differing interests and levels of expertise and priorities, they are united in helping the AR Community become the intellectual backbone of the exchange of information security good practices. Members are a point of contact for matters related to information security awareness in general or related to their countries, industries, or areas of activity.

The AR Community's work increases through a combination of activities which show the continuous involvement of members of the Community. ARNews and a calendar of events are prepared using inputs received by experts and then distributed to Community members who wish to receive periodic correspondence. Along with this, the AR Community offers the chance to participate in presentations at events and to attend and contribute to monthly conference calls. The AR Community hold regular conference calls for sharing emerging good practices, discussing cutting-edge topics and key issues in the information security field.

Furthermore, the members contribute by participating in discussions and drafting white papers on specific security topics, taking part to virtual working groups (VWG).

ENISA, together with some AR Community members, is in the process of producing a white paper to assist EU Citizens to identify risks and threats at ATMs and offering guidance in how to counter them. The increase in European ATM related fraud attacks during 2008 has prompted ENISA to increase the awareness of EU Citizens of the risks and threats.

As a result, ENISA is producing a white paper which will include advice on how to safely use ATMs and how to spot likely risks and threats.

5.1. Achievements

In 2008, some AR Community members participated in VWG which enable the preparation of white papers on obtaining support and funding from senior management while planning an awareness programme and organising awareness programmes in financial organisations.

5.1.1. Obtaining support and funding from senior management

Gaining management support and sponsorship for the awareness programme was recognised as the most crucial aspect of the entire initiative. It is vital to build consensus amongst decision-makers that the awareness programme is important and

worthy of funding. Even though many managers express their desire to support security initiatives, putting it into action is another story. This is the reason why ENISA addressed private organisations staff and decision-makers providing an introduction on the importance of gaining support and funding from senior management of companies. Moreover, it provided a valuable tool to take the first steps towards the preparation and implementation of an information security awareness initiative.



Figure 3: “Obtaining support and funding from senior management while planning an awareness initiative” (ENISA, 2008)

The paper “Obtaining support and funding from senior management” (see Figure 3) seek to raise awareness among senior management on the importance and criticality of endorsing information security awareness within an organisation (ENISA, 2008a).

5.1.2. How organising awareness raising programmes in financial organisations

A more in depth analysis was conducted for the financial services industry such as retails and wholesale banks, investment firms, insurance companies and so on. Data security is a key risk for these organisations by the nature of their business. They are generally hold lots of personal and financial data and their safeguard is crucial responsibility for them.

A set of twenty recommendations were included in the paper “How to organise awareness raising programmes in financial organisations” (see Figure 4) to provide a valuable tool to understand the importance of data loss for this industry sector and prepare awareness raising and training programmes (ENISA, 2008b).



Figure 4: “How organising awareness raising programmes in financial organisations” (ENISA, 2008b)

6. References

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