

RRIS 11/12 Summer Exam

User authentication is an important aspect of information security and it can be looked at from two directions. Firstly, a technical solution such as a user name and password must be provided and the solution analysed from a technical point of view. This solution can then be analysed from the users' point of view.

Discuss a range of different ways of authenticating users both from a technical and a user oriented perspective and from high security and low security application areas.

Your essay should reference the papers in the course collection to back up your statements and recommendations.

What follows is an example of the points that could be made. I am looking for a well structured and reasoned argument that references the papers as support. Students should be aware of viewpoint of the paper's authors and that they may well have their own agenda. If there are competing arguments in the literature then both side of the argument should be summarised.

A number of different ways of authenticating users are covered in the papers. Two key technical papers are Murdoch on Chip and PIN and Karger on the Federal Employee system. Both point out technical flaws in high security systems.

There are a number of papers describing actual end user behaviour using authentication systems. I am looking for a balanced discussion on the scale of the problem and whether poor user behaviour is caused by the technical solution adopted or is an intrinsic problem with any solution. There is no one right answer and so I am looking for a well argued and referenced answer that shows balance.