

RRIS Resit Exam

The two statements "users are not the enemy" and "users are the weakest link" describe two different attitudes towards users when considering information security. Use the papers covered in the course to provide evidence supporting both of these viewpoints. From this basis, show how an awareness of usability issues has led to the development of more secure protocols. Also provide examples where ignoring usability has caused problems.

Answer

I would expect to see knowledge based (eg passwords), token based and biometric authentication covered. Two factor authentication should also be covered. All have usability issues. Passwords have the memorability – strength trade off, visual passwords trade off complexity of registration with ease of use. Tokens can be lost / stolen. Biometrics can be difficult to use. The papers have a range of attitudes to usability, from technically, this will work, to this is easy to use. I would expect a balanced coverage of the issues rather than a polemic on one side or the other.