

Creating Safe Communities – Online Safety Tutorial

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Abstract

International student safety is an important issue for educational providers, especially in light of recent events and media attention. Whilst many institutions provide safety information to international students, this does not guarantee students absorb the information or see it as relevant to them. To address this issue, the University of New South Wales is developing a compulsory 'Online Safety Tutorial', for both local and international students. The purpose of the 'Online Safety Tutorial' is to ensure all students are well informed of possible risks and appropriate measures to take to reduce risk. Additionally, the online tutorial aims to increase students' awareness of their responsibility relating to good safety practices, assuring their own safety and contributing to making UNSW a safe community. The ISANA workshop will discuss the background behind the 'Online Safety Tutorial', the design and implementation of the project so far.

Keywords

safety, safety awareness, online safety tutorial, creating safe communities

Introduction

As part of the 'Creating Safe Communities' project, the University of New South Wales (UNSW) is developing an Online Safety Tutorial. The purpose of this paper is to share our experience on creating and implementing the Online Safety Tutorial. Through the discussion of various aspects of the tutorial it is hoped that other institutions can gain an overview of the tutorial and the project as a whole. By providing a compulsory online safety tutorial to both international and domestic students, UNSW believes that it is a positive step towards increasing safety awareness and creating a safe community.

Objective

The Online Safety Tutorial is one of a number of initiatives aimed at improving the safety of UNSW students. The objective of the Online Safety Tutorial is to promote safety, raise safety awareness and encourage students to engage in good safety practices. By completing the online safety tutorial, students will become more aware of their own safety and the safety of others. The Online Safety Tutorial will also ensure students are well informed of risks and the appropriate measures to take to reduce those risks, making UNSW a safer community.

Background

UNSW has put in place strategies to help keep students safe including the provision of safety information and workshops. While the provision of safety information is important it does not guarantee students absorb the information or see it as relevant to them. To address this concern a decision was made to introduce an online safety tutorial that would be compulsory to all commencing students, both international and domestic students.

Approach

1. Key stakeholders and other players

The Online Safety Tutorial is a UNSW Student Development initiative which is being carried out by Katie Yamaguchi from International Student Services and Jan Thomas from Student Development. However, there are a number of key stakeholders involved in the production of the Online Safety Tutorial, to ensure the final product is of high quality. Within UNSW, advice and development support has come from UNSW Security, Teaching and Learning, Academic Administration, the School of Safety Science, IT Enterprise, UNSW Colleges and the UNSW Safety Committee. From the broader community, advice and content information has come from NSW Community Precinct safety Committee, Randwick Council, City of Sydney, the Attorney General's Office, NSW Police, Maroubra Police and Surf Life Saving Australia.

2. Content Development

The Online Safety Tutorial is made up of an introduction, 9 separate modules, a summary of resources and a conclusion. Each module consists of approximately 2 pages of content, a quiz consisting of 3-4 questions and a link to a factsheet providing further information on the topic. Factsheets can be downloaded during the tutorial or can be accessed at a later date when required by the student. The tutorial will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Below is an outline of the tutorial;

- ◆ Introduction – Creating Safe Communities

- ◆ Module 1: Being Safe
- ◆ Module 2: Safety on Campus
- ◆ Module 3: Safety at Home
- ◆ Module 4: Safety in Sydney
- ◆ Module 5: Travel Safety
- ◆ Module 6: Cyberspace Safety
- ◆ Module 7: Beach Safety
- ◆ Module 8: Party Safe
- ◆ Module 9: Keeping Safe (Optional) – to be completed by students & significant others

- ◆ Summary of Resources / Factsheets
- ◆ Conclusion

Content was sourced from a variety of providers depending on the module topic. For example, a lot of general safety advice, home, travel and party safe information was provided by the City of Sydney, the Attorney General's Office and the NSW Police. Beach Safety information was provided by Surf Life Saving Australian and Safety on Campus information was provided by UNSW Security.

After module content was complete it was sent to the relevant parties for checking. Each module was also sent to a Lecturer from the UNSW School of Safety Science to ensure the quality of the content.

3. Technology

The Online Safety Tutorial will be constructed using the same format as another UNSW compulsory online tutorial managed by the library. By using the same format as other compulsory online tutorials at UNSW, commencing students will be familiar with the process and style of the tutorial.

Staff from Learning and Teaching were consulted to ensure the Online Safety Tutorial is robust and complies with eLearning best practice. The eLearning Design team also provided tools to create a more interactive tutorial. By using applications such as Comic Life, Go Animate and Hot Potatoes, students will be able to view aspects of the tutorial visually and can interact with the content. Teaching and Learning also assisted with making the quiz available on Blackboard, (software used in many educational institutions that manages eLearning). Students will log into Blackboard using their Student ID and password. Academic administration monitors student completion of the tutorial.

UNSW Media students were employed to take photos on campus and create short video clips depicting a variety of on-campus safety scenarios. By adopting a more interactive approach, students are more likely to engage with the tutorials content.

The Online Safety Tutorial will be housed on the UNSW Student Development homepage.

Implementation

The Online Safety Tutorial will be piloted in 2010. The pilot tutorial will be made available to international students and students from the Bachelor of Social Science commencing in 2010. Completion of the pilot program will be voluntary, however students completing the tutorial will be placed into a draw to win a prize.

As part of an evaluation process, feedback will be sought from those students completing the pilot Online Safety Tutorial. It is intended that the Online Safety Tutorial will be made available for all commencing students in 2011.

Conclusion

The Online Safety Tutorial is a UNSW Student Development initiative to help promote safe awareness and good safety practices. After the Online Safety Tutorial is launched, students will not only have access to a safety tutorial but they will also be aware of safety resources that they can access at anytime when required. By creating an online tutorial for all commencing students, both international and local students, UNSW aims to help students become aware of their own responsibility to safety and to creating a safe community.