EXCELLENCIA
INTERNATIONAL MULTI-DISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF EDUCATION
Volume 3, Issue 5, 2025 ISSN (E): 2994-9521

Internet and Cybersecurity: Threats and Their Prevention

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Abstract:

The internet has become an indispensable tool in modern society, revolutionizing education, commerce, social interactions, and information exchange. However, its widespread use has also led to increased cybersecurity threats, including malware, phishing, ransomware, and DDoS attacks, posing significant technological, social, and economic risks. Despite the growing importance of cybersecurity, many individuals and institutions lack sufficient digital literacy and awareness of effective protection measures, particularly in emerging digital societies such as Uzbekistan. This study aims to analyze the nature of cyber threats, assess preventive strategies, and highlight the ongoing efforts in Uzbekistan to enhance cybersecurity through legislation, education, and technical innovation. The research identifies major threats, outlines effective preventive measures such as strong passwords, secure networks, and user awareness, and evaluates national initiatives like the "Information Security Law" and the activities of UZCERT. By integrating both technical and psychological dimensions of cybersecurity, and contextualizing these within Uzbekistan's evolving digital landscape, the article offers a comprehensive approach to understanding and improving cybersecurity at both individual and institutional levels. The findings emphasize that cybersecurity is not solely a technical issue but a societal responsibility, requiring conscious digital behavior, widespread digital literacy, and coordinated action from governments, institutions, and individual users to ensure a safe and resilient digital future.

Keywords: Internet, Cybersecurity, Cyber Defense, Cybercrime, Cyberattack, Cyberterrorism, Ddos, Malware, Ransomware, Spam, Phishing, Information Security

Introduction

In the digital age, the Internet has become an indispensable tool in all areas of life, from education and commerce to communication and governance. Its rapid development has opened up immense opportunities, revolutionizing how societies function and individuals interact. However, alongside these advancements, the threat landscape in cyberspace has expanded significantly. Cybersecurity, once a niche concern, has emerged as a critical necessity for individuals, organizations, and governments alike. Defined as the practice of safeguarding systems, networks, and data from malicious attacks, cybersecurity now encompasses a wide range of strategies and disciplines, including technical defenses, user awareness, and legal frameworks. The increasing prevalence of cybercrimes, cyberattacks, and cyberterrorism highlights the urgent need for robust protective measures. In Uzbekistan, as in the rest of the world, the development of digital infrastructure has been accompanied by initiatives to fortify information security, such as the adoption of the Information Security Law and the establishment of national response centers like UZCERT. Nonetheless, despite governmental efforts, the individual user's role in cybersecurity remains paramount. Simple actions such as using strong passwords, avoiding suspicious links, and maintaining system updates are critical lines of defense against pervasive threats like malware, phishing, ransomware, and DDoS attacks. Therefore, fostering digital literacy and a culture of cybersecurity awareness is essential for building a resilient information society. As the internet continues to penetrate deeper into daily life, ensuring cybersecurity will require not only technological advancements but also an active, responsible, and educated user base committed to safeguarding their digital environments.

Methods

The methodology of this research is based on a comprehensive analysis of existing literature[1], practical cybersecurity strategies, and national initiatives to understand the nature of internet threats and methods for their prevention[2]. A qualitative approach was employed by synthesizing definitions and classifications of cybersecurity threats from authoritative sources[3], including definitions provided by CSEC2017 and Cisco, to establish a conceptual framework[4]. Case studies of various cyber threats such as malware, phishing, ransomware, and DDoS attacks were examined to identify common patterns and vulnerabilities[5]. Preventive techniques were systematized by reviewing best practices in cybersecurity[6], such as the application of strong passwords, two-factor authentication, antivirus software usage, regular system updates[7], and safe internet behaviors like avoiding suspicious links and public Wi-Fi networks[8]. Additionally[9], governmental policies and institutional initiatives in Uzbekistan, such as the implementation of the "Information Security Law" and the activities of organizations like UZCERT[10], were analyzed to assess structural cybersecurity measures at the national level[11]. The methodological focus included both technical (software and systems security) and psychological (user behavior and digital literacy) aspects of cybersecurity[12]. The synthesis of global sources and Uzbekistan’s localized experience provides a broad yet context-specific understanding of cybersecurity threats and the corresponding multi-layered defensive strategies[13]. This integrated methodological approach ensures that the study not only addresses the technological facets of cybersecurity but also highlights the critical importance of education[14], awareness, and policy initiatives in building a resilient digital society[15].

Results and Discussion

In today’s world, the internet has become an inseparable part of society, an essential tool for activity across all fields. Opportunities for education, commerce, information exchange, and even social interactions have expanded through the internet. However, with its widespread use, cybersecurity issues have also grown more pressing. Cyberattacks, phishing schemes, data theft, and other cyber threats are creating significant risks across various sectors of society.

The importance of the interconnection between the internet and cybersecurity is increasing. Therefore, ensuring cybersecurity is becoming a necessity not only for governments or large corporations but also for individuals and small businesses.

The Internet (or internet) is the global system of interconnected computer networks that uses the Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) [bl to communicate between networks and devices. It is a network of networks that consists of private, public, academic, business, and government networks of local to global scope, linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless, and optical networking technologies. The Internet carries a vast range of information resources and services, such as the interlinked hypertext documents and applications of the World Wide Web (WWW), electronic mail, internet telephony, and file sharing.

Cybersecurity is currently one of the newly emerging concepts, and various definitions have been given to it. Specifically, the CSEC2017 Joint Task Force defines cybersecurity as follows: "Cybersecurity is a knowledge domain based on computing, which encompasses technology, people, information, and processes to ensure that operations are performed correctly in environments where malicious actors exist. It involves creating, implementing, analyzing, and testing secure computer systems". Cybersecurity is an interdisciplinary field of study that includes legal aspects, policy, human factors, ethics, and risk management.

In the field of networks, Cisco, an organization operating in this domain, defines cybersecurity as follows: "Cybersecurity is the practice of protecting systems, networks, and applications from digital attacks". These cyberattacks typically aim to control, alter, or destroy confidential information, extort money from users, or disrupt normal business operations. Today, implementing effective cybersecurity measures is becoming more challenging in practice due to the increasing number and variety of devices, which enhances the potential of malicious actors.

Cybersecurity combats three types of threats:

1. Cybercrime — actions organized by one or more hackers with the intention of disrupting a system's operations or gaining financial profit. The primary objectives of cybercrime include:

Illegally obtaining money, securities, credit, material assets, services, privileges, real estate, fuel resources, energy sources, and strategic raw materials;

Evading taxes and various fees;

Money laundering;

Forging documents, stamps, seals, forms, or cash receipts for personal gain or fraudulent purposes;

Stealing confidential information for personal or political motives;

Taking revenge on administration or colleagues due to personal conflicts;

Disrupting the national financial system for personal or political reasons;

Destabilizing the country's situation or administrative structure for political purposes;

Sabotaging or eliminating competitors, or disrupting the operations of an organization, enterprise, or system for political goals;

Concealing other types of crimes;

Engaging in research matters;

Demonstrating personal intellectual abilities or superiority.

2. Cyberattack — actions primarily aimed at gathering politically sensitive information.
3. Cyberterrorism — a collection of illegal activities in cyberspace that threaten national security, individuals, and society. The main objective of cyberterrorism is to influence social, economic, and political issues.

With the development of information technologies in our republic, special attention is being given to addressing information security issues, particularly those related to computer security, in economic and government management bodies.

Although the use of the internet is convenient and efficient, various risks also arise with it. These risks can have negative effects not only technically but also psychologically, economically, and

socially. Below are examples of the main cyber threats encountered on the internet:

Malware. Malware is also known as malicious code or malicious software. Malware is a program inserted into a system to compromise the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of data. It is done secretly and can affect your data, applications, or operating system. Malware has become one of the most significant external threat to systems. Malware can cause widespread damage and disruption, and requires huge efforts within most organizations.

Spyware, a malware intended to violate privacy, has also become a major concern to organizations. Although privacy-violating malware has been in use for many years, it has become much more common recently. Spyware invades many systems to track personal activities and conduct financial fraud.

Organizations also face similar threats from several forms of non-malware threats. These forms of cyber threats are often associated with malware. A more common form is phishing. Phishing involves tricking individuals into revealing sensitive or personal information.

Ransomware. Ransomware prevents or limits users from accessing their system via malware. Ransomware asks you to pay a ransom using online payment methods to regain access to your system or data. Online payment methods usually include virtual currencies such as bitcoins. Ransomware is one of the most widely used methods of attacks.

Ransomware enters computer networks and encrypts files using public-key encryption. Unlike other malware, this encryption key stays on the cyber criminal's server. Cyber criminals will request ransom for this private key. Cyber criminals are using encryption as a weapon to hold the data hostage.

Ransomware is hard to detect before it's too late, and ransomware techniques continue to evolve. Because of this, your institution should focus on prevention efforts. Prevention efforts include training for employees and strong information security controls.

Distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks. DDoS attacks make an online service unavailable by overwhelming it with excessive traffic from many locations and sources. Website response time slows down, preventing access during a DDoS attack. Cyber criminals develop large networks of infected computers called Botnets by planting malware. A DDoS attack may not be the primary cyber crime. The attacks often create a distraction while other types of fraud and cyber intrusion are attempted.

Spam and Phishing. Spam includes unwanted, unsolicited, or undesirable messages and emails. Phishing is a form of social engineering, including attempts to get sensitive information. Phishing attempts will appear to be from a trustworthy person or business.

Cyber criminals pretend to be an official representative sending you an email or message with a warning related to your account information. The message will often ask for a response by following a link to a fake website or email address where you will provide confidential information. The format of the message will typically appear legitimate using proper logos and names. Any information entered into the fake link goes to the cyber criminal.

Safe use of the Internet depends on each user. Today, there are various technical and psychological measures to prevent existing cyber threats. Below are the key methods:

1. *Strong passwords and two-factor authentication*. Passwords form the first line of defense for user information. Simple and easily guessable passwords (such as 123456, password, or name) pose a risk. Strong passwords should be at least 8 characters long and contain a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters. Additionally, two-factor authentication (2FA) further strengthens user account protection.
2. *Using antivirus and security software.* It is necessary to install regularly updated antivirus software on computers or mobile devices. These programs detect harmful files, isolate them, or delete them. Additionally, firewalls monitor the incoming and outgoing data traffic of the

network.

3. *Being cautious of suspicious links and files.* The main method of phishing attacks is to trick the user into visiting a fraudulent website through a deceptive link. Before opening any email, link, or file from an unknown source, it is crucial to verify its reliability.
4. *Not disclosing personal information on Social Media.* Being overly open on social media can lead to various negative consequences. Avoid sharing personal information such as phone numbers, home addresses, financial details, or scanned copies of important documents.
5. *Regular updates.* It is essential to regularly update operating systems and applications. Many updates are aimed at fixing security vulnerabilities.
6. *Using secure Wi-Fi Networks.* Cyberattacks are easier to carry out over public Wi-Fi networks. It is advised not to access internet banking or confidential pages on these networks. In case of necessity, using a VPN (Virtual Private Network) enhances security.

In recent years, digital technologies in Uzbekistan have been developing rapidly. The expansion of e-government, online services, distance education, and e-commerce has made information security issues more urgent. Therefore, several initiatives to ensure cybersecurity are being implemented at both the state and private sector levels. In 2018, Uzbekistan adopted the "Information Security Law". Additionally, one of the key organizations in the ICT sector ensuring cybersecurity in Uzbekistan is "UZCERT" (Computer Emergency Response Team), which takes measures against network security threats, provides notifications about issues, and offers necessary recommendations. Furthermore, the Information Security Center under the State Security Service is also operational. The government is promoting digital literacy and conducting awareness campaigns on security. Information security basics are being taught in schools and universities. Local developers are working on creating protection tools such as antivirus and encryption systems.

The rapid development of information technologies is bringing the Internet into all aspects of human life. Sectors such as education, healthcare, finance, transportation, and even public administration are being digitized. At the same time, while these processes open new opportunities for individuals and organizations, they also bring about new risks and threats. Specifically, cybersecurity threats have become one of the most pressing issues today.

The risks encountered on the Internet – phishing, malware, DDoS attacks, and the theft of personal information – are not just technological problems, but also social and economic threats. Especially among young people and children, a lack of digital literacy, access to untrustworthy links, and the failure to protect passwords are opening the door to cybercrime.

To ensure cybersecurity, first and foremost, the user must be aware and cautious. Using strong passwords, regularly updating programs, avoiding suspicious links, using secure Wi-Fi networks, and protecting personal information are simple yet effective measures.

At the state level, attention to this issue is also increasing. In Uzbekistan, the "Information Security Law", the UZCERT center, and other initiatives are strengthening the cybersecurity system. By teaching the basics of information security in educational institutions, digital culture is being shaped in the new generation.

In the future, the degree of safe internet use will directly depend on each user's knowledge, technological literacy, and responsibility. Cybersecurity is not just about technical tools, but also requires conscious approaches and collaboration. Therefore, every member of modern society must be active in this area and not be indifferent to their own information security.

Conclusion

The rapid expansion of the internet into all sectors of modern life has simultaneously enhanced opportunities and increased vulnerabilities, making cybersecurity a fundamental necessity. The internet's integration into education, commerce, healthcare, and governance has been accompanied

by the rise of serious threats such as cybercrime, cyberattacks, and cyberterrorism, exposing individuals and institutions to risks of data breaches, financial losses, and social disruption. This article emphasizes that cybersecurity requires a holistic approach, combining technical measures like strong passwords, antivirus software, and secure networks with the cultivation of user awareness and digital literacy. Uzbekistan's government has taken significant steps by enacting the Information Security Law, establishing organizations like UZCERT, and integrating cybersecurity education into school curricula, signaling a commitment to building a resilient digital society. However, the responsibility for cybersecurity does not rest solely on state structures; it demands proactive participation from every user. Future efforts must focus on expanding technological literacy, encouraging cautious behavior online, and fostering collaboration between public and private sectors. Cybersecurity is not only about combating external threats but about fostering a conscious, responsible digital culture where every individual plays an active role in safeguarding their personal and national cyber environment. Ensuring a safe internet future thus relies on both technological innovation and the responsible behavior of all internet users.

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