ASSA Charge 1

Evaluate RIT's policy on junk email, with particular attention to whether junk email with a link labelled "unsubscribe" should continue to be unfiltered, given that the "unsubscribe" link could take the user anywhere.

ASSA Recommendation

No action required.

Rationale

The ASSA Charge 1 sub-committee brought the charge to the attention of ITS and inquired about current practices regarding e-mail processing. In short, ITS does regularly review and update their policies. With respect to the specific concern raised in the charge, the sub-committee is in agreement with ITS that "Blocking email that contains a single word will generate a high amount of false positives and borders on censorship." If "unsubscribe" links were to become high risk, ITS's periodic review would update policy to sideline such e-mails.

ITS provided the following information:

- "Anti-spam works by using a combination of techniques to stop unsolicited email while creating a balance between stopping unwanted email and minimizing false positives."
- "RIT's goal is to stop unsolicited email that does not adhere to best practices for marketing or is abusive in nature."
- "Email is processed centrally by RIT for spam, scams, viruses, phishes, and other compliance threats. Some email clients may take their own actions like moving items to a Junk Mail folder, warning about deceptive links, or blocking access to executable content. Desktop anti-virus software may add additional functionality."
- "Messages for employees may be sidelined to a central policy quarantine or stored in the end user spam quarantine at https://spam.rit.edu. Messages for students and alumni may be sidelined to a central policy quarantine or tagged so that Gmail puts them to the end user's spam folder. They may also be determined to be spam by Gmail's processing.
- Messages that are sidelined to a central policy quarantine include messages that may contain higher risk content such as viruses, phishes, scams, and spam from abusive sites. These policy quarantines are reviewed periodically. False positives are released and rules are updated routinely. The email sent here also includes messages that may violate published policies, laws, or may contain a threat to the RIT community (e.g. bomb or other like threats, payroll/W4 phishing, ransomware, message purporting to be from RIT executives, etc.)."
- "The above is a general list of the types of things that may occur. There is no definitive documented list as a) both the techniques and actions change based on current threats and b) disclosing the current techniques could be used to exploit the protections in place."
- "Most messages that are perceived to be spam that are not caught or marked as spam fit into the category of general marketing that an individual either directly or indirectly

signed up for whether they realized it or not through the company doing the marketing or one of their affiliates and should unsubscribe from those messages."

Additional information may be found on the ITS website at the following links:

https://www.rit.edu/its/servicing/secure-computing/spam-filtering

https://www.rit.edu/its/servicing/secure-computing/reporting-spam

The ASSA Committee voted on January 23, 2019 in support of this recommendation 9-0. Committee members present and voting in favor of the recommendation were: Steve Luxmore, Gretchen Wainwright, Tracy Magin, Matthew Fluet, Irene Evans, Brian Barry, Navieda Huggins, Bobby Moakley, and Liz Ruder.   Sandra Connelly and Rebecca DeRoo were not in attendance (and not included in the official vote), but provided support of the "No action needed" recommendation by email.

Charge 2: *Consider instituting Student Evaluations of Academic Advisors*

Response*:* No action of Faculty Senate is recommended.

Rationale:

Students (SG) wants:

- feedback to each advising meeting (like a ITS feedback ticket) [note that there are concerns with this - load of evals being generated, but more so the confidentiality of the students]

Students have concerns about:

- continuity between meetings
- not getting what they need as far as how to follow a path to their career choice [note from Sandi and Lynne - this is really the role of a faculty advisor in many departments]
- role of faculty advisor vs. professional advisors is not clear [note that some of this may be corrected in orientation / intro to departments / etc.]
- if students have concerns about an advising session / advisor, who do they see? [assistant dean or department chair]

This Committee met with Lynne Mazadoorian (Director, University Advising Office, RIT) and determined the following:

- students can give feedback any time that they want to the Assistant Dean or Department Chair/Head
- advisors are enforcing what is decided by faculty - not making programmatic decisions, etc.
- professional advisors are reviewed annually
    - reviews include any information from the student surveys that are conducted annually (to a subset of 3,000 students)

Action Plan for Student Government as outlined by the President of Student Government:

- SG will create an infographic for students outlining the roles of faculty and academic advisors as well as who to contact if they have concerns
- [The SG President] will be working with Lynne and the Advisor Delegates Committee to work on making sure each college's website very clearly outlines who to contact if students have complaints

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