

Computer Security Course EDA263 (DIT 641)

Mid course meeting with student representatives

Date: 2012-02-09, 1500

Place: Room 5128 at the CSE department

Participants:

Students: Guillermo Barredo García, Sonny Karlsson, Marcus Laurila

Teachers: Magnus Almgren, Arne Dahlberg, Erland Jonsson

Discussion

The following is a summary of the discussion points, and the teacher comments.

Changes from last year

The students had no comments. The teachers explained that the course had been moved from study period 1 to study period 3, possibly removing some problems raised previous years, e.g. difficulty to sign up for labs because students had no access to the student portal. The teachers also asked about the course book (changed two years ago), and it seemed fine.

Last year, the student representatives raised the possibility to show video clips during the lecture. For that reason we discussed student interaction during lectures and the difficulty of finding a good video clip (to the point, but not too long). A previous year, video clips were available on the home page as “extra reading” but they did not seem to be that popular. Some students would like to see more interactions during the lectures.

Study Climate

The students thought that the study climate is good.

Lab Slot Booking

The lab slot booking is done through one physical piece of paper, where the students can sign up for a new lab time when they are in the lab room completing another lab. The students wondered why there is no online system, and the teachers explained that there was no central support for this function. In most cases, the students can just drop by during lab times (most occasions are not fully booked), or send an email to Arne to book a specific time if they are unable sign the list themselves.

Course Content

The course coverage is good – not too small and not too large – but there was a wish for a more “practical” part with maybe less theory. For example, through a guest lecture, more labs, or more programming in the labs. The teachers explained that there will be (and usually is) at least one guest lecture every year. Furthermore, a fourth lab is tentatively being planned for next year covering web based security. Even though it would be interesting to extend the programming part of the course, the student body is too heterogeneous and over time we have actually had to reduce some of the programming content as some students have not had enough programming skills. This course is

introductory, directed at many different types of students. A more practical programming course might be suitable in a smaller and more advanced setting.

Finally, there was a comment that one of the lectures (Policies) had too much content on the blackboard. However, one student representative actually argued against this point and said that he preferred content on the blackboard. In other courses, some of the material shown on the blackboard is summarized on the web afterwards. The teachers will consider this for next year (but this is also the first time the students have complained about too much content on the blackboard).

There was also a suggestion from one student to have the labs graded so that they would be taken more seriously. A discussion followed about other courses at Chalmers and whether this was a general feeling among the students (probably not). The teachers will keep this in mind for future course development.