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80% OF HACKS PREVENTABLE!

Brussels, 25 September 2024 - 80% of hackings could have been prevented thanks to two-step verification. To keep criminals out, the Centre for Cybersecurity Belgium (CCB) is launching a new campaign to promote two-step verification (2FA).

In October, European Cybersecurity Month, the Centre for Cybersecurity Belgium (CCB), Febelfin and the Cyber Security Coalition are jointly launching an awareness campaign to encourage internet users to strongly secure accounts with two-step authentication (2FA).

"*When using online or mobile banking, two-step verification has been fully established for a long time. But now we want to encourage the use of two-step verification as much as possible, across all online platforms. Indeed, two-step verification makes it significantly more difficult for fraudsters to access personal data, even if they have the password,*" said Karel Baert, CEO Febelfin.

Do like Herstappe: keep cybercriminals out and use two-step verification!

Last year, the hacking of several cities and municipalities received extensive press coverage. Personal accounts of some mayors and celebrities were not spared either. With regularity, passwords are stolen and shared on the internet.

"With our campaign, we have one goal. Getting all Belgians to use two-step verification! That's our big ambition. But we are starting small. Literally. We are starting in the smallest municipality in Belgium, which is Herstappe. The Safeonweb team went down to Herstappe and informed and helped residents there with 2FA," says Miguel De Bruycker, director general of the CCB.

"Herstappe is currently the most digitally secure municipality in our country, but we hope they will soon be followed by others. We now call on all cities and municipalities, as well as businesses, organisations and schools, to follow Herstappe's lead. Use two-step verification and keep hackers out," stressed Phédra Clouner, Deputy Director-General of the CCB.

Keep hackers out!

"Every day, at least one company in our country falls victim to a cyber-attack with serious consequences. The common thread in many serious cyber incidents is the lack of two-step verification.

As much as 80% could have been prevented if 2FA was used. Today we kindly but also urgently ask companies too: activate two-step verification everywhere you can now. It is my conviction that with this simple reflex we can increase cyber security in Belgium quite a bit more." Miguel De Bruycker, CCB director general.

- Tip 1: Start with your email.
- Tip 2: Then activate it on the websites where you also leave your sensitive data: webshops, booking websites, websites where you book tickets,...
- Tip 3: Don't forget your social media accounts.

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Make it a habit to use it everywhere you can.

In figures

- Stolen passwords were responsible for 29% of all ransomware attacks. (https://www.statista.com/statistics/1410445/cause-ransomware-attacks-global/

- 7 million Belgians use Itsme, an important form of two-step verification thus becomes established: https://www.itsme-id.com/nl-BE/blog/jaarcijfers23

According to results from Monkey State Years and Génération 2024, 16% of Flemish youngsters and 23% of French-speaking youngsters use some form of two-step verification. When researchers ask further questions during workshops, however, it turns out that only 4% actually use it.

Own survey results on the use of two-step verification (n=1000), July 2024

- 71% of respondents know the term two-step verification
- 55% also know exactly what it means.

There is an age effect: While we see that older people are more concerned with cybersecurity and already have a good understanding of phishing, the term two-step verification is not yet as familiar in the oldest generations. The 35-44 year olds seem the most familiar. They are most likely to deal with two-step verification at work.

18-24y: 72% know the term
25-34y: 75% know the term
35-44y: 85% know the term
45-54y: 73% know the term
55-64y: 70% know the term
65+: 55% know the term

- 57% use it on "Websites where bank details are registered (e.g. online shopping, booking trips, purchasing tickets,...)",51% on work accounts, 52% on private email accounts , 47% on social media accounts, 35% on Gaming accounts

Two-step verification (2FA): the solution!

Two-step verification or 2FA is a simple solution to protect your data even better.

To gain access to your account, you have to prove that you are who you claim to be. This can be done on three different face:

- with something only you know (your password or PIN);
- with something you alone have (your phone or token);
- with something that is you (your fingerprint, face, iris...).

Usually you use one of these factors to prove who you are, but it is better to use 2 or more factors: this is two- or multi-step authentication (2FA or MFA). You then use e.g. a password and on top of that you also have a code sent to your mobile phone, or you use your fingerprint and a code to gain access.

Nothing is more frustrating as a hacker to find, after the euphoria of cracking a password, that the target has 2FA installed.

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