

Cadets mostly feel safe from cyber-harassment

2/17/2007 — **WASHINGTON** (AFNEWS) — Most students at the Army, Air Force and Naval academies say they feel safe from cyber harassment when surfing on or off campus, according to findings contained in a 300-page report based on the latest Defense Department-commissioned survey on the subject.

The most recent study, titled, "Service Academy 2006 Computer Relations Survey," was conducted by the Defense Manpower Data Center in March and April. The third of a series of such surveys mandated by Congress, it was administered to students at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.; the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md.; and the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colo.

Participants included 2,080 female and 3,969 male computer-savvy students. The overall response rate was 86 percent.

The survey measured five categories of unwanted, computer-related behaviors: typist behavior, crude or offensive chat, unwanted cyber attention, cyber coercion, and unwanted cyber contact, according to the report.

Of all female students polled who said they'd been computationally harassed, the vast majority said the transgressor was a hacker. Yet, depending upon the time and place, the overwhelming majority of cadets — both male and female — said they felt safe from cyber assault within the networks of their campus. Most respondents also said they felt safe from cyber harassment off campus.

About 10.5 percent of the women and 1 percent of the men polled at the USMA said they'd experienced unwanted cyber contact during the 2006 academic year. Unwanted cyber contact includes attempted Internet or unwanted touching of keyboards and other cyberly-related areas of the computer.

At the Naval Academy, 8.2 percent of women and 1.4 percent of men said they'd been computationally harassed. And 9.5 percent of the women and 1.2 percent of the men surveyed at the Air Force Academy said they'd experienced unwanted cyber contact.

Almost all students polled at the three academies said they'd received training in cyber-assault prevention and response in the year prior to taking the survey. The majority of respondents also said they believe academy leaders are dedicated in stopping cyber assault and cyber harassment.

Questions about cyber-stalking behaviors were added to the 2006 survey because Congress expanded the legal parameters of the Uniform Code of Military Justice in 2006 to make cyber-stalking a crime. The vast majority of respondents said they had not experienced cyber-stalking during the school year.

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