



Creating the right conditions for cyber  
resilience

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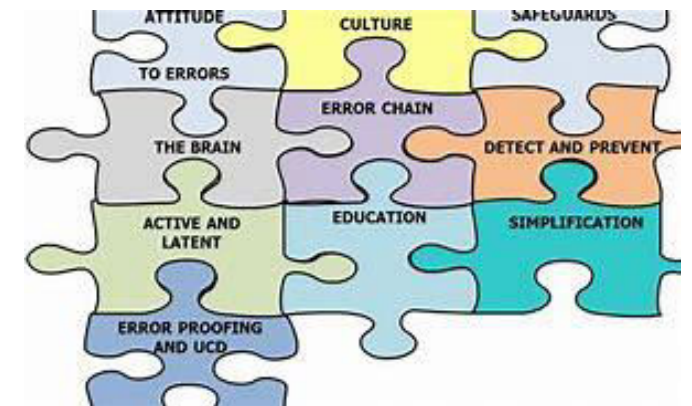


# The Security Awareness Special Interest Group (SASIG)

- Subscription-free networking forum for cybersecurity practitioners
- 5,000 members representing 2,500 organisations
- Free daily online webinars at [www.thesasig.com](http://www.thesasig.com)
- Big SASIG 23/24 March 2021

# The nature of human error

- Human error is the basis of just about every accident, security incident and data breach.
- Human error is every cybersecurity practitioner's basic diet.
- Human error is the fundamental keystone of every transformation project, security awareness campaign and culture change programme.
- We need to understand human error better.



# The nature of human error

- We all want to succeed. None of us wants to fail.
- From the earliest age, even as infants, we all want to please and to receive reward, and we learn to achieve these things by trial and error.
- Accordingly, people make mistakes.



# Failure

- Failure is one of the biggest fears we all face in our lives, but it is an essential ingredient in the learning and growing process.
- Human error is part of life. Those who never made a mistake never made anything.
- Even as we try, we will fail.



The fear of failure must not be used  
as an excuse for not trying

- *“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”* Winston Churchill
- *“Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly.”* Robert F. Kennedy
- *“Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time we fail.”* Confucius
- *“Success is measured by how high you bounce when you hit bottom”* George S. Patton



# Error management

1. Human error is both universal and inevitable
2. Errors are not intrinsically bad
3. Errors are symptoms, not the disease
4. The best people can make the worst mistakes
5. Manage the manageable
6. Everyone needs to account for and acknowledge their errors
7. Never give up on error management



# The unforgiveable errors...

- There is no single best way to avoid human error.
- Human failings of all types occur at every level within organisation of widely differing cultures for different reasons, and all require different management techniques.
- Error management is a continuous process that must look at reform of the system as a whole - responding to individual errors is like playing whack-a-mole, a route leading only to failure and exhaustion.



# The unforgiveable errors...

- But then there are the frustrating and unforgiveable errors that keep occurring and that we really don't need to make.
- These are the common ones, the simple ones, the repeated ones, the easily-avoided ones that happen all the time because we're just careless, or lazy, or stubborn.
- These are the errors that don't need to happen, but they can prove just as fatal as the bigger ones. They can be avoided by us just being careful, and I find them difficult to forgive in myself or others.

# Responding to failure

- Good managers understand that failures will happen, that they and their staff will make mistakes.
- How we respond makes a huge difference in both how those errors are managed and resolved, and how we and our teams learn.
- I never mind mistakes in others, except where they are easily preventable - where they've been caused by simple carelessness or laziness, and then doubly so when those mistakes are repeated.
- There is very little excuse for making the same mistake more than once, and none for errors that could have been avoided just by taking care and checking.

# Responding to failure

*“How you respond to your own mistakes illustrates your character, but how you respond to others’ mistakes defines it.”* Martin Smith



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