

Wiki activity: Questionnaires – Research Methods and Professional Practice – Michael Geiger

The questionnaire from Schoenherr & Thomson (2021) on unintentional insider threat behaviours tries to assess employees' competencies in relation to cyber security. The questionnaire can be divided into two sections.

The first section, questions 1 to 5, aims to find out personal information about the respondents and their technical background. The subsequent questions from 6 are intended to determine the respective behaviour of the respondents in the context of safe behaviour in the digital space.

The general structure of the questionnaire can be rated positively, but it should be questioned why question 2: "Do you often do you use a computer in your job?" is positioned before the more open question 3: "Are you a practitioner in information sciences (e.g., network administrator)?" and question 4: "Are you an educator in information sciences (e.g., a professor, instructor)?".

Question 2 and the possible answers also show room for improvement. On the one hand, the answer options "Rarely" and "Often" are subjective, since the respondents could evaluate differently what is to be defined as often.

Furthermore the question can be rated as leading. A rephrasing of the question: "How often do you use a computer in your job?" would phrase the question more neutrally. On the other hand, answer options that provide specific times in hours per week or as a percentage would allow more explicit results, especially since this was taken into account in question 5.

It is not clear from the questionnaire in the appendix whether there was an option to tick the questions under item 6. Assuming that this was not the case, checkable boxes or similar would support the design of the questionnaire.

It also should be considered whether the negatively worded questions 6.5, 6.6., 6.8 and 6.9 should be expressed in a positive context. Examples of this would be:

6.5: I change my password often.

6.6 I consider the security of my personal information.

6.8: I always read the 'terms of service' or 'privacy' section of apps that I download.

6.9 I share personal information on social media.

By doing this, the questions would be of the same design as the other questions, so there would be less chance of accidentally providing incorrect responses.

References:

Schoenherr, J. R. & Thomson, R. (2021) The Cybersecurity (CSEC) Questionnaire: Individual Differences in Unintentional Insider Threat Behaviours. *2021 International Conference on Cyber Situational Awareness, Data Analytics and Assessment (CyberSA)* 1-8. Available from: <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/9478213> [Accessed 05 December 2022].