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Protection motivation theory (PMT) as a driving force for cybersecurity awareness

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Abstract

Despite the use of various technical controls and technologies, a pivotal weakness in Information Communication Technology (ICT) security remains the human element. Cybersecurity awareness training can be used to influence and change behaviour towards the adoption of secure cyber practices. It is imperative to reduce cybersecurity risks through awareness and cybersecurity training to influence safer behaviour. Various behaviour and motivation theories exist, which attempt to explain how behaviour can be influenced. This paper focuses on the benefits of Protection Motivation Theory in the delivery of security awareness topics. Examples of stakeholders that can be involved in cyber security awareness training are mapped onto the protection motivation theory. This helps to show how PMT can be used in different user environments to effectively communicate cybersecurity awareness at the correct level. This paper proposes the usefulness of applying PMT to the cyber security awareness domain to create a culture of cybersecurity awareness and promote cybersecurity education and awareness.