A former student recently wrote to me with a request for suggestions on what to read in preparing for the CISSP exam. I decided to answer him by writing an essay that readers of this column who are thinking about the exam could also use. By the end of the essay, I had so much material I was forced to chop it up into smaller pieces to fit the constraints of this column, so here’s part 1 of 4.

* * *

The key to passing the CISSP exam, in my opinion, is daily attention to expanding one's exposure to interesting and thought-provoking information and ideas in the field. As you know from my constant reiteration of the point in our classes at Norwich, I have nothing but contempt for cramming – it is not possible to remember what is learned in a rush for very long. Indeed, I teach all my students to use SQ3R (Survey/Question, Read/Recite, Review) a well-established study method that pays off with long-term integration and retention of knowledge. Readers may want to use my one-page summary, available from my Web site in HTML <http://www.mekabay.com/methodology/sq3r.htm> and in PDF <http://www.mekabay.com/methodology/sq3r.pdf>.

Anyone committed to professionalism should read a wide range of reputable publications and participate in serious discussion groups.

Some of my favorite electronic newsletters are the following:

Computerworld Newsletters
http://www.computerworld.com/action/member.do?command=registerNewsletters
  Disaster Recovery
  Security
  Infrastructure & Control
  Security: Issues and Trends
  Virus and Vulnerability Roundup

“CRYPTO-GRAM” from Bruce Schneier
http://www.schneier.com/crypto-gram.html

“DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report” from the US Department of Homeland Security
http://www.dhs.gov/infrastructuredailyreport

“EFFector” from the Electronic Frontier Foundation
http://www.eff.org/effector/

“EPIC Alert” from the Electronic Privacy Information Center
http://www.epic.org/alert/
Network World Newsletters
Identity Management
http://www.networkworld.com/newsletters/dir/index.html
Access Control
http://www.networkworld.com/newsletters/vpn/index.html

“ITL Computer Security Bulletins” from the National Institute of Standards and Technology Information Technology Laboratory Computer Security Division’s Computer Security Resource Center

“RISKS DIGEST” from the Association for Computing Machinery Committee on Computers and Public Policy
http://catless.ncl.ac.uk/Risks/

SANS Newsletters http://www.sans.org/newsletters/?ref=1701
“@RISK: The Consensus Security Vulnerability Alert”
“NewsBites”

ZDNet UK newsletters http://community.zdnet.co.uk/account/manage.htm
“IT Whitepapers”
“Security”

More resources in my next newsletter.

* * *


M. E. Kabay, PhD, CISSP-ISSMP is Program Director of the Master of Science in Information Assurance <http://www.msia.norwich.edu> at Norwich University in Northfield, VT. Mich can be reached by e-mail at <mailto:mekabay@gmail.com>; Web site at <http://www.mekabay.com/index.htm>.

Copyright © 2006 M. E. Kabay. All rights reserved.

Permission is hereby granted to Network World to distribute this article at will, to post it without limit on any Web site, and to republish it in any way they see fit.