

# 208 News

**ASIS Newsletter of the Year – Winner 2008, Honourable Mention 2006, Winner 2003**

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## What are the top security threats facing the research sector?

**B**ecause we all view security differently and face different threats it is important for organisations to carry some formal risk assessment to identify the key issues and gaps in the overall security plan. Typically we see that there is a lack of security awareness and where policies are in place the staff are either unaware of them or have not been trained in their effective use. Following a thorough review it is essential that key policies are put in place and enforced, staff policies, network security and access to data and facilities are some examples which need to run alongside an appropriate communication and training process. But, where do you start?

Agenda decided to carry out a number of research security surveys to assess how different groups within the research sector viewed security. The survey was developed after a review to establish the top ten threats for the survey using information from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure, MI5 guidelines, Special Branch Police, the ISO27001 Information Management Security System and the Secured by Design Police accreditation. From the review a list of ten security concerns was developed and a survey generated. In no order of priority the ten primary potential threats were identified as:

### Top Ten Security Threats

- Own Staff/Agencies. Who has access to our facilities? Are our staff and contractors staffed screened?

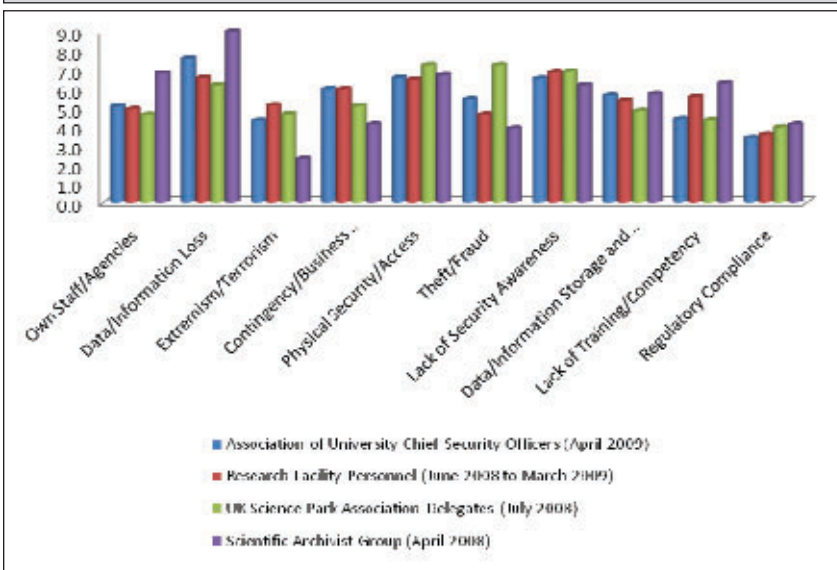
- Data/Information Loss. Are we confident that our data and our data held by third parties are secure?
- Extremism/Terrorism. How concerned are we by the terrorist or extremist threats?
- Contingency/Business Continuity Planning. Have we got in place tested and updated contingency plans?
- Physical Security/Access. How confident are we that our access controls and physical security measures are robust?
- Theft/Fraud. How concerned are we about theft and fraud issues?
- Lack of Security Awareness. Are employees security aware or our weakest security link?
- Data/Information Storage and Disposal. Are we confident that access to sensitive data is controlled?
- Lack of Training/Competency. Are we sure that our staff know what to do?
- Regulatory Compliance. Breaches of the Data Protection Act are increasing, but what about employing illegal workers or the investigation following an infiltration or allegations?

The delegates at six research conferences during 2008 and 2009 were asked to rank the ten threats indicated by giving a score of 10 to the highest threat, 9 for the next and so one until finally giving 1 for the least concerning threat.

In each case the survey exercise was conducted as a part of a

*Continued on page 4 . . .*

Graph 1: Top Ten Security Threats Results



presentation entitled “Delaying Research Facility Security”. The results are shown in Graph 1:

**Association of University Chief Security Officers Results**

The chief security officers were primarily concerned with data/information loss followed by physical security/access and lack of security awareness. Contingency/business continuity planning also scored highly along with data/information storage and disposal and theft/fraud. Lowest scoring were regulatory compliance, extremism/terrorism and lack of training/competency.

**Research Facility Personnel Results**

Data and information loss was also the main concern for the facility managers although they did not score it as highly as the archivists. Physical security/access and lack of security awareness were ranked the next two highest for this group overall with the next four highest concerns being own staff/agencies, extremism/terrorism, contingency planning/business continuity planning and data/information storage and disposal. The lowest scoring threat was regulatory compliance.

**UK Science Park Association Results**

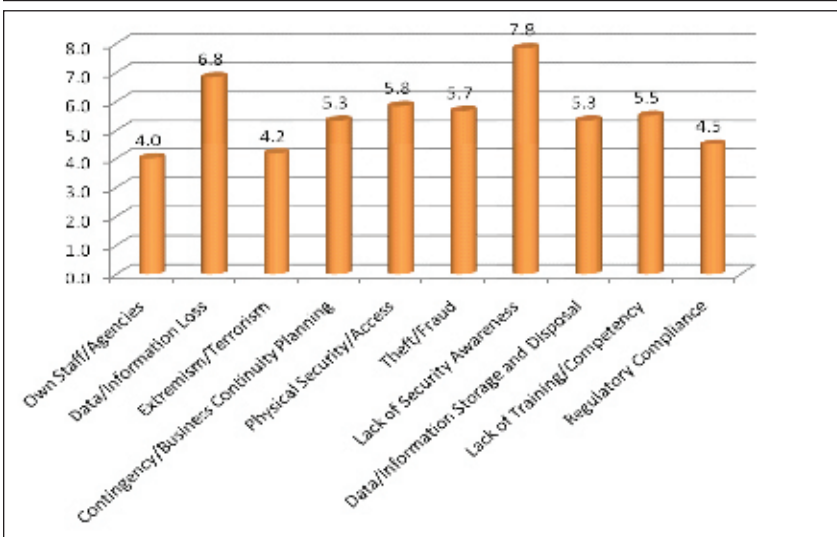
There were two main for the science parks with physical security/access and theft/fraud joint highest with lack of security awareness also scoring highly. The next two highest concerns were the lack of security awareness and data/information loss. The next four highest were contingency/business continuity planning, data/information storage and disposal, extremism/terrorism and own staff/agencies. The lowest concern was regulatory compliance.

**Scientific Archivist Group Results**

The primary concern for the archivists was data and information loss which scored very highly. The archivists’ next concerns revolved around four key issues; the first was physical security/access, the second was concerns over their own staff/agencies, the third was lack of security training/competency and the fourth was lack of security awareness. All other scores were relatively low with extremism/terrorism being scored as the lowest concern.

The results indicate that some of the primary concerns are similar across all four groups and Graph 2 shows the mean results.

Graph 2: Top Ten Security Threats Means



- USEFUL RESOURCES:
- [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)
  - [www.mi5.gov.uk](http://www.mi5.gov.uk)
  - [www.cpni.gov.uk](http://www.cpni.gov.uk)
  - [www.bis.gov.uk](http://www.bis.gov.uk)
  - [www.ico.gov.uk/](http://www.ico.gov.uk/)
  - [www.bsi-uk.com/InformationSecurity](http://www.bsi-uk.com/InformationSecurity)
  - [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)
  - [www.londonprepared.gov.uk/businesscontinuity/assessingyourrisk/](http://www.londonprepared.gov.uk/businesscontinuity/assessingyourrisk/)

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