



Institute for Responsible Online and Cell-Phone Communication

Introducing Digital Responsibility to a Digital Generation



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The History and Rationale of the Digital Risk Assessment

What is your digital risk spike? The Digital Risk Assessment helps to illustrate how much negative attention you are calling to yourself based on your digital behaviors.

The Assessment was conceptualized based on the increased momentum of society's narcissism and voyeurism as if they were two speeding locomotives headed towards each other until they collide creating, well, what looks like this – **^** – a spike. The Assessment helps to illustrate how much negative attention you are calling to yourself based on your digital behaviors. It consists of a series of questions that helps to cast a light on the poor judgment you may be (blindly) employing with digital tools and technologies so you can stop immediately.

The questions are very simple, and all you have to answer is yes or no. Depending on how you answer the question, you may get a point value, and your "risk spike" goes up. However, you may provide an answer that gives you 0 points which is ideal, as your risk spike stays level.

The higher your risk spike, the more negative attention you are calling to yourself and your actions. The more negative attention you call, the more temptation there is for "someone" to look in on you through your digital device, your "window to the world." Remember, your "window" works two ways, and all you have to do is give someone a reason to look in, and they might. However, if you maintain a low risk spike through responsible use, your odds of becoming a victim are low as you are one in a billion digital users.

While the Risk Assessment was conceptualized from society's increase in narcissism and voyeurism, its actual creation and execution stems from an idea far more simple. Imagine you and I are standing outside of a stadium after a sporting event, just minding our own business. There are 50,000 people standing around us, and one of them is a thief. If nobody is doing anything to call attention to themselves, then it is likely that somebody who gets pick pocketed would have been selected at random by the criminal. Now imagine the same situation, however, just prior to the thief pick pocketing somebody, I stand up on a table in that sea of 50,000 people and I hold up a sign with my full name, phone number, address, vacation plans and a sexy picture.

Whereas before I was just one person in a sea of 50,000 people who *might* get robbed, I have just increased my chances of facing an issue (it is not guaranteed) because like an idiot I stood up and shared all kinds of personal information with complete strangers. In fact, with that kind of information, perhaps some people in the crowd who were not thieves before will be tempted to become one considering the info I just handed to them. By standing up and sharing certain information with 50,000 people, I increased my risk of exploitation.

The Risk Assessment applies the same theory. The more you answer a question that earns you points, the more information you are sharing with the global [digital] village and everyone that lives in it. The more you answer yes, the higher you are holding a bull's-eye up over your head, and the larger the bulls-eye gets (like me standing on that table in front of 50,000 people holding up information for criminals to take advantage of).

However, if your answers are consistently earning you 0 points, then your spike is low, thus you are putting less exploitable information "out there" for everyone – including those you folks you want to avoid - to see. The lower your risk spike, the less negative attention you call to yourself, the less you stand out to everyone in the digital world, and the less liability you incur.

The previous information was extrapolated from the book, "[Public and Permanent](#)" with permission from Richard Guerry.

