

Study Skills Stan Collins

by Stan Joseph Collins

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Study Skills Assignment

Stan Collins – 2022429

1. Table of Contents

1. Table of Contents	2
2. Introduction	3
3. Presentation.....	4
3.1. Presentation overview	4
3.2. Self-Introduction	4
3.3. Aspects of a successful presentation	5
3.4. Future Presentations.....	5
4. Self-evaluation	6
4.1. Transferable skills.....	6
4.1.1. University	6
4.1.2. Work.....	6
4.2. Self-assessment.....	6
4.3. Personality Type Tests	7
4.3.1. Intro to personality quizzes.....	7
4.3.2. Open Psychometrics - Big 5.....	7
4.3.3. Open Psychometrics - Extended Jungian Type	7
4.3.4. 123test - Jung Personality test.....	9
4.3.5. Quiet Revolution	9
4.3.6. PersonalityMax	10
4.3.7. Personality quiz analysis	10
4.4. Career test.....	11
4.4.1. 123Test.....	11
4.4.2. Guardian career test	11
4.4.3. PersonalityMax	12
4.5. Learning Style.....	12
4.6. Comparison to self-assessment	13
4.7. Conclusion.....	13
5. Goals	13
5.1. Short term/ Long term Goals	13
5.1.1. S.M.A.R.T Action plan – Pass Maths exam.....	13
5.1.2. S.M.A.R.T Action plan – Improve sleep schedule.....	13
5.1.3. S.M.A.R.T Action plan – Weight Loss	14
5.1.4. S.M.A.R.T Action plan – Graduating University	14
6. Application	14
6.1. Data Protection	14

6.1.1.	Backup strategy.....	14
6.1.2.	Disaster aversion.....	15
6.2.	Time Management.....	15
6.2.1.	Increasing Productivity.....	15
6.2.2.	E-Portfolio	16
6.2.3.	Assignment Action Plan	17
7.	Conclusion.....	17
8.	References	18
9.	Appendix	19
9.1.	Full speech accompanying presentation.	19
9.2.	Honey & Mumford Learning Styles.....	21
9.3.	Self-Evaluation of Academic skills.....	21
9.4.	Self-evaluation Action Plan	22
9.5.	Assessment Action Plan	23
9.6.	RansomWare Report.....	24

2. Introduction

During the COVID pandemic of 2020, universities across Britain are predicting a record breaking student dropout rate [1], with reports suggesting an increase of 11% of students considering leaving their course [2]. Even for those that will remain, University life has a well-documented history of being tough for those unprepared. A Randstad report in 2020 found that of their correspondents, 64% said their studies and university lifestyle negatively impacted their state of wellbeing [2]. Due to the growing demands of student life, it is more important than ever that students be prepared for university life. Throughout the study skills module, various techniques and methods for the adaptation to life at university were taught. This report aims to summarise, reflect on and provide evidence for the application of those skills, as well as documenting S.M.A.R.T action plans for the future.

3. Presentation

3.1. Presentation overview

As an initial introduction to the course and fellow course mates, students were required to give an introductory presentation to themselves, summarising their history, personality, long term goals and strengths in a five minute time slot.

The following is brief summation of that presentation, accompanied by a selection of slides. The full speech accompanying the presentation can be seen in appendix 9.1.

3.2. Self-Introduction

Stan Collins, aged 22, is a recent graduate from the University of Southampton, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in Ship Science. Originally from Burgess Hill, as a child he was shaped largely by his grandfather, an ex army engineer, and the scouts, who took him on trips across the world.

Hobbies

In his spare time, Stan is often found baking, a profession he is getting increasingly good at as options outside remain slim. A keen filmophile, Stan remains up to date with modern releases as he works his way through old classics.



BAKING



DRAWING



FILMS



RUNNING

Opinions on things

LIKES

Good Books and video games
Blood Orange
Rainy days
Weird Indie music
Bees (in theory)

DISLIKES

Having to cancel all my festivals and concerts
Constantly loosing at chess
English Breakfast tea
Sharing my weird music taste with others
Bees (in practice)

GREW UP NEAR
BRIGHTON

WENT TO UNI AT
SOUTHAMPTON

STUDIED MARINE
ENGINEERING

Despite enjoying a night in at home, a source of sadness has been the cancelation of the various festivals booked before the onset of covid and the accompanying restrictions.

A lover of self-deprecating humour and taking life less seriously, he would consider himself a people person, a trait that has helped his progression in and outside of his studies. In the future, Stan aims to complete this course and transition to a full-time staff member at his company.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths:

People Person
Adaptability
Enthusiasm
Mixology

Weaknesses:

Spelling
Can burn out if not careful
Graphic Design
Thinking of a 4th weakness

3.3. Aspects of a successful presentation

The OCR guide to presentation lists three key elements to a successful presentation [3].

- **Understandable:** Key messages must be understood and taken away by the audience, too many ideas or information overload will hinder the ability to take on the messages of the presentation
- **Memorable:** Most people only have limited short term memory, so ensuring your presentation sticks in the mind is key. Psychological ticks such as the rule of three could be used to a presenter's advantage.
- **Emotional:** Successful presentations tend to be the ones that connect to the audience on an emotional level. Purely relying on raw data can be alienating for some people, if factually correct.

Careful consideration must be put into the purpose and audience of the presentation. Differing knowledge bases and backgrounds require variations of explanation and layman's language. The general tone of a demonstration would vary wildly from that of an informative brief.

When presenting in person, body language should be always be considered. Nonverbal cues such as tone of voice, gestures and posture can all help grab the audience's attention, or allow audiences to switch off and not pay attention [4].

Audience participation, particularly through the answering of questions provides another opportunity to ensure audiences take on the message of the presentation. Focus should be placed on answering the actual question asked, rather than using it as a branching off point for talking points or rehearsed dialogue [5].

3.4. Future Presentations

When assessing the feedback given on the report, more emphasis should be given to speech delivery. Coming in at under 4 minutes, delivery could have been slowed to better meet the brief of a five minute presentation. Slowing down the talk would enable to talk to be clearer, and could reduce the presenter from getting ahead of themselves, reducing time filling techniques like 'umm' or 'err', which will appear unprofessional in future work environments.

Based on the other presentations given by course mates, further detail could have been put into professional achievements and projects. Given the additional time available, a brief explanation of the author's individual project on cavitation noise reduction using bubbles could have been added to the talk, or summations of work roles outside of university and post-graduation.

Focussing the positives, the feedback received outlined the clear slide design. Their simple design allows for a clear and focused image, reducing visual overstimulation or a cluttered appearance. The incorporation of images kept audiences engaged, and the consistent visual style was professional. Text size was also appreciated, nobody had to squint or strain to read any of the slides.

The presentation style itself also received good feedback, describing a confident, well prepared delivery. Emphasis was also put onto the humour of the presentation, appropriate given the casual nature of the talk, but perhaps not relevant for future work projects.

4. Self-evaluation

4.1. Transferable skills

4.1.1. University

Ucas, alongside the national extension college, have produced a number of guides for key skills to ease the transition to higher educations [6]. These skills are: Understanding & answering exam questions, How to present an argument, Time management, Proofing and editing your work and Academic essay writing. Clarke University goes further, listing 10 essential skills for their college students [7]. These skills are listed as: Time management, Stress management, Study skills, Money management, Assertiveness skills, Well-developed self-care skills, Keeping safe & avoiding risky behaviours, Seeking assistance when needed, Respecting the rules & policies, and Displaying honesty, integrity & perseverance.

4.1.2. Work

For non career specific work skills, Forbes recommends these following 12 'soft skills' for functioning and interacting with others in the workplace: Learnability, Resilience, Agility, Collaboration, Verbal communication, Written communication, Empathy, Creativity, Problem-solving, Leadership, Negotiation, and Technology [8]. In 2019, the royal academy of engineering revisited a 2013 review of engineering skills needed for the future, and concluded that there is a shortfall of engineering talent, and as such more needed to be done encourage people to chose engineering. This involves dispelling myths around engineering. Despite previous misconceptions, a solid work ethic, core maths skills and a desire to learn and adapt are all that is necessary to start a career in engineering [9]. Obviously the Covid pandemic has massively changed the working landscape, with many workers forced into home-working, which requires a much different set of skills, but this report is focusing on pre-pandemic work, with the hope that work environments returns to an in person landscape soon.

4.2. Self-assessment

Strengths: Adaptability, Enthusiasm, People skills, Confidence, Leadership, Dedication

Throughout the course of the author's career thus far, the number of different roles across his career indicate an adaptability to mould to the position he is in. Each role required vastly different skills, be that physical or mentally demanding. Always keen to take on a new challenge, and confident in his own ability while not being afraid of failure, he approaches each new stage of his life with an enthusiasm to push onwards.

Weaknesses: Burnout, Organisation, Easily distracted, Often 'moody'

While it is easy to focus on the positives, a key part of a self evaluation is recognition of flaws. In that regard, this report recognises several issues that would ideally be addressed through these personality tests, or at least planned around through work style or career advice.

Ideal Careers: Engineer, Filmmaker

The two ideal careers listed represent the author's dream jobs, given their education and their own perceived skill sets. The jobs are in many aspects very different. Engineer requires a hands on approach, is intellectually challenging, and demands graduate level education. Filmmaker on the other hand would need nothing more than equipment already owned by the author, and the creativity and desire to make their own films. As such, this report expects the careers advice given by the personality tests to be quite varied, reflecting the author's own varied views on career paths.

4.3. Personality Type Tests

4.3.1. Intro to personality quizzes

Personality tests, when filled out honestly and accurately, can provide analysis on persons' personality, their strengths and potential weaknesses, career ideas and behaviour. The majority of these tests are built around the Myers-briggs method [10], assigning one of 16 types of personality to a person based on answers to specific questions. Further examples of tests like career guidance are included in this report, measuring responses against various metrics such as 'social' or 'hands on'. While this report will remain mostly objective, sections of this report will reference the author's interpretation of and reflection on the responses to the various personality tests.

4.3.2. Open Psychometrics - Big 5

This test measured responses against 5 factors, as seen in figure 1 below. The results are displayed as a percentile of other test takers you have scored higher than. As such, that percentile figure should be ignored for analysis, as the more people who take this test, the more that percentile will change, without actually updating the score on this result. The percentile also requires other participants fill out the test correctly, something that cannot be confirmed, and further doubted when considered factors like the Dunning-Kruger effect [11].

Figure 1: Big 5 test results

Results summary

Your results from the IPIP Big Five Factor Markers are in the table below. The table contains a raw score and also a percentile, what percent of other people who have taken this test that you score higher than.

Factor	Factor label	Raw score	Score percentile
I	Extroversion		78
II	Emotional stability		11
III	Agreeableness		35
IV	Conscientiousness		9
V	Intellect/Imagination		70

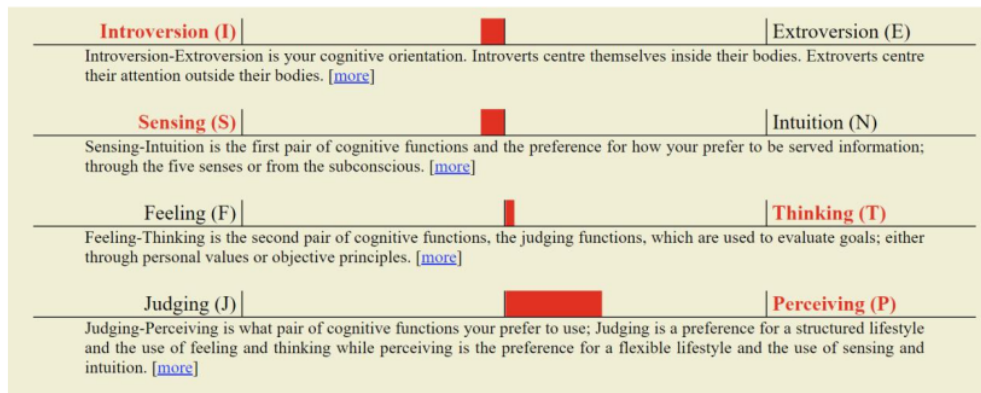
Big five personality trait scores calculated by openpsychometrics.org

When considering the results, the two factors with the highest response are intellect/imagination and extroversion, indicating an openness to experience and an outgoing personality respectfully. Agreeability, or a person's optimism, was also fairly high, relating to lower aggressive or critical tendencies. Noticeably lower are the factors of conscientiousness and emotional stability. Low scores in conscientiousness are related to impulsive and disorganised behaviour, something perhaps reflected in the author's life. A lack of emotional stability is linked to neuroticism and general negative emotions. While a small amount of neurotic behaviour is healthy, increased neuroticism can lead to depression, anxiety and even a decreased life expectancy [12]. Some tips for lower neurotic behaviour are being mindful, deep breathing and practicing self-acceptance.

4.3.3. Open Psychometrics - Extended Jungian Type

A version of the Myers-Briggs personality type method, this test provides users with a four letter personality type, each letter being the side that user fell on each spectrum. As shown by figure 2, the author's personality type is ISTP.

Figure 2: The spectrum results for the extended Jungian type quiz



A detailed breakdown of these results is shown below in figure 3. The personality type describes an introverted personality well-tuned to analytical problem solving and engineering work, matching the author's career path to present. Similarities are also seen in the gravitation to risky hobbies and the desire have one's space and choices respected.

Figure 3: ISTP personality type definition

According to Myers-Briggs, ISTPs excel at analyzing situations to reach the heart of a problem so that they can swiftly implement a functional repair, making them ideally suited to the field of engineering. Naturally quiet people, they are interested in understanding how systems operate, focusing on efficient operation and structure. They are open to new information and approaches. But contrary to their seemingly detached natures, ISTPs are often capable of humorously insightful observations about the world around them. They can also be closet daredevils who gravitate toward fast-moving or risky hobbies (such as bungee jumping, hang gliding, racing, motorcycling, and parachuting), recreational sports (such as downhill skiing, paintball, ice hockey, and scuba diving), and careers (such as aviation and firefighting).

ISTPs may sometimes seem to act without regard for procedures, directions, protocol, or even their own safety. But while their approach may seem haphazard, it is in fact based on a broad store of knowledge developed over time through action and keen observation. ISTPs enjoy self-sufficiency and take pride in developing their own solutions to problems.

ISTPs are content to let others live according to their own rules, as long as the favor is reciprocated. ISTPs endure reasonable impositions without complaint—but if their "territory" is encroached upon, eroded, or violated, they defend what they view as rightfully theirs.

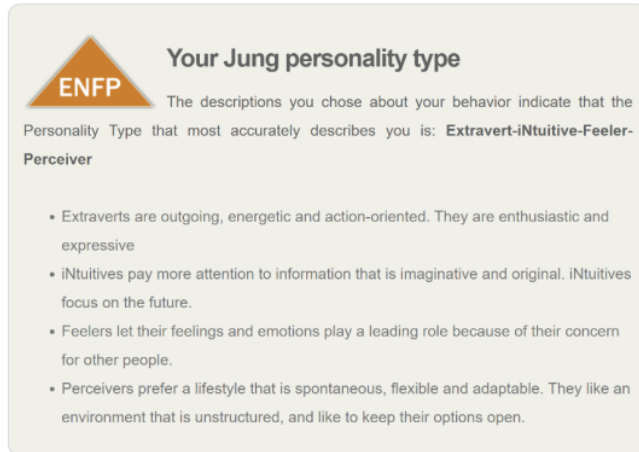
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When analysing the spectrum results in figure 2, it is clear that the first 3 spectrums were very close, only marginally tipping over to the I, S and T sides. On another day, or another test, these results could have swung the other way, and the user's personality type could be ENFP, resulting in an entirely different result. All spectrum results are polar, either being one or the other, with no room for personalities on the border between the two types.

4.3.4. 123test - Jung Personality test

Another Myers-Briggs personality type indicator, this quiz was simpler than those that came before, asking less questions and taking answers in absolutes rather than on a spectrum of agree to disagree. The personality type, here ENFP, and its explanation, are shown in figure 4.

Figure 4: The ENFP personality type explanation



As theorised in the previous section, on this test the author received a personality type of ENFP, almost an exact opposite result to the last quiz. Here, the results describe an extravert who follows intuition over their senses and views their goal through personal preferences over objective principles. Despite the different result, similarities can again be found with the author's life and view of himself. Further explanation goes into how ENFP's can

contribute to team work or organisations with 'a special brand of warmth' and 'little hesitancy in becoming involved', characteristics the author believes they have.

4.3.5. Quiet Revolution

A simple 10 question test evaluating whether the user is an introvert or extrovert. Based on the author's responses, they are classified as an ambivert, falling in the middle of the introvert-extrovert spectrum, similar to the result of the Extended Jungian Type quiz. This could explain why the results for the previous two tests gave different results on the introvert-extrovert spectrum, as they only have polar results on each spectrum.

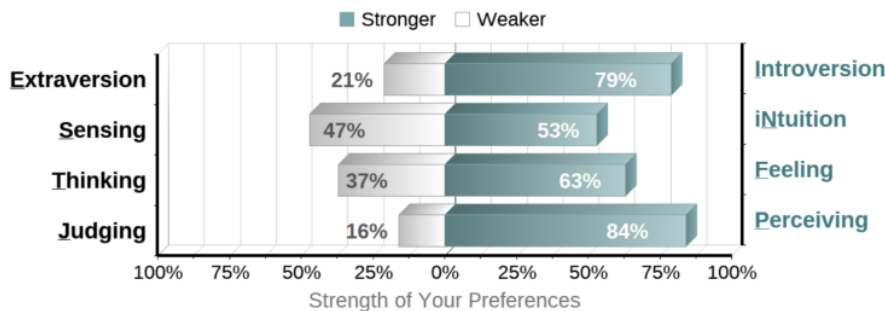
4.3.6. PersonalityMax

A noticeably longer quiz, this website required 221 questions be answered both in absolutes and on a spectrum, producing the most detailed report of the author's personality type. When completed, a huge report containing 36 different graphs based on the various inputs is generated. Another Myers-Briggs test, this quiz produced the personality type INFP.

Figure 5: PersonalityMax results

Your Personality Type is INFP (Dreamer)

Introverted (I) + Intuitive (N) + Feeling (F) + Perceiving (P)



Producing another different personality type, this report's huge selection of data describes the author as a 'dreamer' and 'visionary', neither seeming an apt description. The sheer amount of data and description in this report mean finding similarities between oneself and the report is easy, such as being able to work independently or being able to understand how others feel, but the report also encompasses much that the author does not identify with. The personality type breakdown is so long and encompassing that it ceases to be personal, and it becomes difficult to take its advice seriously. Advice for self-improvement such as 'be yourself' and 'listen to criticism' are so broad that they cannot be aimed at personality type INFP, and as such it is hard to decipher important and useful advice from the broad and generic.

4.3.7. Personality quiz analysis

It is the opinion of this report that while personality tests can provide analysis for behaviours and advice on self-improvement, the examples laid out in the report exemplify the negatives with the process. Three Myers-Briggs tests, taken within hours of each other, provided three different results, outlining three distinct personalities. Figure 2 details the inner working of these quizzes, assigning polar results to behaviours that exist on a spectrum, which if near the centre of that spectrum can easily be read as either one or the other.

Beyond the misinterpretation of results, having seen three distinct personality descriptions, the differences between them feel minimal at best, with every report having identifiable sections and strengths, and parts clearly not represented in the author. The tests only give positive results, and because all the descriptions are so vague (perceptive, driven, flexible etc.) they are hard to argue with. This broad descriptive language is known as the Forer effect (or Barnum Effect), a technique used by purveyors of astrology and other pseudoscience to convince people they hold accurate information about them [13].

Further, these personality types can lead to over analysis and self-diagnosis. The Open Psychometrics - Big 5 quiz suggested potential neurotic behaviours, a genuine medical condition attributed to the onset of depression and discontent. This kind of casual mention of serious conditions will, in most cases, be a complete over reaction to normal behaviour and could lead to users believing there is something wrong with themselves. Self-diagnosis is a growing issue with the rise of online medial sources like WebMD, and has been shown to lead to mistrust of actual doctors and the trivialisation of mental disorders [14].

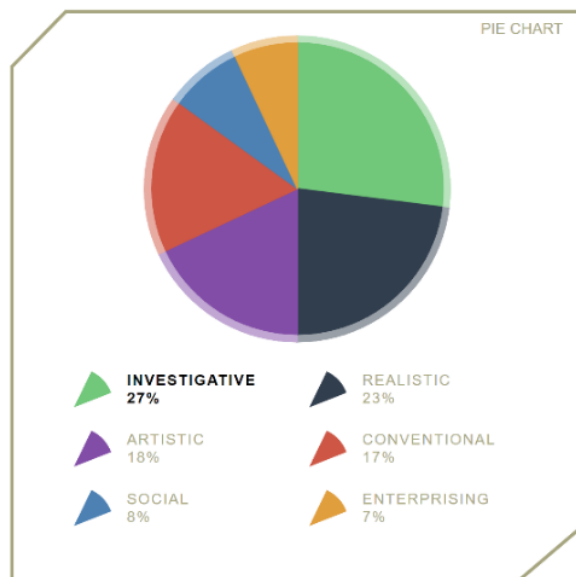
Additionally, multiple studies have shown the Myers-Briggs test totally fails to predict people's success in various job, and even disputes the existence of the 16 personality types [15]. While taking these tests as a fun way to think more about your behaviour is fine, the tests should not be viewed as anything more than entertainment.

4.4. Career test

4.4.1. 123Test

The 123test has users choosing between pictures showing specific work activities, with each picture depicting work supposedly associated with a type of personality. Users are given four images of various jobs, and have to reject one role, and tick their favourite. Methodology like this is inherently flawed, as having a preference for two of the roles, or no real negative feelings towards any option isn't an acceptable input. This generates a career personality type, consisting of a six-letter code in order of your preference towards that career 'personality'.

Figure 6: Pie chart of each career type



The author's generated code was IRACSE, showing a preference towards 'investigative' work, followed by 'realistic' and 'artistic' careers. The full percentage breakdown can be seen in figure 6.

Suggested careers for this personality type are geographer, archaeologist, physicist, pharmacologist and other degree level subjects showing a mixture of hands on work and theoretical calculation.

4.4.2. Guardian career test

This test requires users' opinion on various activities and subjects rather

than explicit job roles as the 123test did, removing intentional or otherwise bias from users' inputs against jobs they think they do not like but could be good at.

Figure 7: Guardian Career test results

Hands-on: 14

Your ideal work is mainly about engaging with the physical world, for example building, cooking, craft, DIY, working with animals, plants and machines, sports and hands-on therapy. Example jobs include: sports coach, physiotherapist, engineer, LGV driver, builder, mechanic, veterinary nurse.

Information and research, processes and systems: 18

Your ideal work is mainly about researching or managing information. This will include analysis, cataloguing and database management, but may include investigating topics in depth, IT, science, maths, quality control, systems and regulations. Example jobs include: accountant, scientific researcher, investigative journalist, legal assistant, book-keeper, health and safety officer, purchasing professional.

Creative use of ideas, materials or situations: 18

Your ideal work is mainly about working imaginatively with ideas or designs. This includes jobs in the arts, performing, creative writing, and also visual design, lateral thinking, business creativity, adapting or coming up with new ideas, working in situations where no rulebook exists. Example jobs include: graphic designer, training consultant, wedding planner, public relations.

Similar to the 123test, the results indicate a preference for research-oriented roles, with slightly less emphasis on being hands-on. Interestingly, the test also suggests a high score for creative roles. The website gives guidance for how to use these scores, suggesting combining roles within each of the top categories, rather than providing a list of ideas. A homogeneous combination of these three roles could be an engineer, hand crafting prototype designs for new concepts.

4.4.3. PersonalityMax

In contrast to the previous tests, the PersonalityMax career advice suggests jobs more in line with creativity and self-expression. This was attached the INFP personality quiz results, so may not be the most accurate when compared to the author's actual career path or desires.

Figure 8: Personalitymax results

Activist	Employee	Librarian	Social Scientist
Actor/Actress	Development Specialist	Marine Biologist	Social Worker
Animal Trainer	Farmer	Minister	Songwriter
Artist	Fashion Designer	Missionary	Speech Pathologist
Choir Director	Filmmaker	Music Teacher	Teacher
Church Worker	Park Ranger	Musician	Therapist
Composer	Graphic Designer	Photographer	Translator/Interpreter
Conductor	Holistic Health Practitioner	Physical Therapist	Veterinarian
Counselor	Human Resources	Professor	Video Editor
Editor	Journalist	Psychologist	Web Designer
Educational Consultant	Landscaper	Record Producer	Writer
		Researcher	Zookeeper
		Singer	

The complete career suggestions for an INFP personality can be seen in figure 8. The two items in bold, Actor and Musician, are the report's suggestions for the most compatible careers for the author, a stark contrast to the career of engineer he finds himself on. With a few exceptions, such as marine biologist and filmmaker, almost the entire list are roles the author would object to doing, given previous experiences or a complete lack of skill (songwriter, singer, artist etc.).

4.5. Learning Style

According to the Honey and Mumford leaning style self-evaluation (see Appendix 9.2), the author's leaning style would be a mix of activist and pragmatist. Activists learn best from student-oriented teaching methods like task groups, while pragmatists take on more information through practical

learning like demonstrations or work experience. Learning styles this report recommends to avoid are unstructured theoretical discussions and passive lectures.

Similarly, the PersonalityMax quiz resulted in a Kinesthetic learning style, a style of learning best through movement and experimentation. The recent onset of lockdown measures and online lecturers have not made Kinesthetic learning possible, and as such extra effort should be put into note taking and taking on information.

4.6. Comparison to self-assessment

The damning evidence on the psychological value of personality tests put aside, there are a select few pieces of advice to take from the tests. When reflecting on previous subjects the author struggled with, subjects requiring high levels of creativity like art and music were always difficult, whereas more binary 'right or wrong' subjects like maths or science with more analytical approaches were always easier. This is in line with the career and learning styles identified by the tests, and as such their advice for how best to apply ones' self in the workplace and learning environment, such as taking up any chances for practical learning, or trying to get a hands-on role at work, should be taken on and applied to the author's day to day life.

When comparing the initial self-evaluation's strengths and weaknesses to the results of the personality tests, almost every strength was found in the feedback from the personality types. This can either be viewed as incredible accuracy on the tests' part, or the Forer effect in action. It is the opinion of this report that it is the Forer effect, and as such any advice given is equally generic. That said, generic advice for the self-evaluated flaws, like lack of organisation or attention span, is useful and is worth applying. Actions plans to change the author's behaviour and address some of these flaws in the short term can be found in section 5.1.

4.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, while personality types and their respective quizzes have no scientific grounding, nor show any correlation between their suggested job roles and success in those roles, generic advice given within those quizzes can be used to address self-acknowledged flaws and help identify new flaws perhaps overlooked previously. Career advice, while even less specific, can be useful to suggest ideas users may not have considered before, or to help with more vague issues.

5. Goals

5.1. Short term/ Long term Goals

Listed below are 4 goals for the future, along with associated S.M.A.R.T action plans. An academic self-evaluation exercise and resulting action plan are included in appendix 9.3 and 9.4.

5.1.1. S.M.A.R.T Action plan – Pass Maths exam

Most pressing among short term goals is the need to pass the upcoming maths exam. Having obtained a degree in marine engineering, this GCSE/early A-level recap of maths should be easy, but this plan aims to avoid complacency. Revision sessions are arranged with a classmate on the Friday and Monday before the exam, and the evening before has been blocked on the calendar as revision time, to avoid secondary bookings or distractions. A mock exam was taken the week before the exam, so analysis of those results can identify problem areas to focus on.

5.1.2. S.M.A.R.T Action plan – Improve sleep schedule

An additional short term goal is to improve and stick to a sleep schedule. Early rises at around 2 – 5am are becoming more frequent, and steps should be taken to avoid this becoming the normal. Exposure to screens before going to bed has been shown to reduce time slept, body rhythms and

overall attentiveness [16]. A ban on screen time immediately before sleeping should improve overall sleep quality. Practicing meditation after putting down the phone would allow the body time to relax, and guided meditations apps that do not require the screen to be on and shut down once finished would allow for an easing into this process.

5.1.3. S.M.A.R.T Action plan – Weight Loss

The first long-term goal is to return to pre-pandemic weight, something affected by the sedentary lifestyle brought on by the covid-19 lockdowns. This can be measured on household scales, and against clothing bought pre-pandemic. This goal is achievable as dramatic weight loss has been achieved before, although aided by a physical job in the past. The main techniques for achieving this goal are going for runs twice a week, to replace the cancelled parkrun events, and eating healthier. Runs will be carried out on Wednesdays and Saturdays, accompanied by housemates, aiming to return to a sub 25 min pace by June. Healthier eating will be achieved by making vegetarian meals twice a week, and replacing some red meats with vegetarian alternatives.

5.1.4. S.M.A.R.T Action plan – Graduating University

The second long-term goal is to graduate university and gain a full-time position. The progress towards this goal will be measured both in grades received for university work, and in KSB progression through work placements, in preparation for the final workplace discussion. Previously a degree has been achieved at the University of Southampton, so there is experience in finding work-life balance. Regular apprenticeship evaluations are arranged every 6 weeks to identify and address any issues arising with the course. This goal should be achieved after the final year project in 2026.

6. Application

6.1. Data Protection

6.1.1. Backup strategy

Due to the ever-increasing reliance on electronic devices for almost all aspects of modern life, ensuring data is safe and accessible is more important than ever before. The risk of losing data through hardware failure, human error or malicious attempts from external sources (see section 6.1.2) requires that back-ups be made for precious data to protect it.

A simple method for protection against these threats is the ‘three places’ rule, a guide to storing information in multiple places. As Zaid Ammari writes [17], “A well-conceived data backup and recovery strategy that includes local backup, online backup and offsite backup in three geographically different locations will significantly reduce the risk of downtime and customer service interruptions. Offsite tape storage, vaulting, online backup systems and data restoration facilities serve as excellent hedges against unanticipated disasters while adding lasting value to a business.”

The author’s own data is protected in this way, applying a system of local, online and external data stores to protect against data loss. Here, data is first stored on one of the users three laptops, then saved again to dropbox. Finally, regular update are made to one of the two external hard drives kept unplugged when not in use.

The online storage allows data to be easily moved from one device or another, and can also be accessed from external devices like university computers, but can require upload and download times for large files. The external hard drives are useful for larger files such as pictures or long reports, such as the final year group report for ship science, a 60,000 word report on concept design. Having multiple local stores in the form of multiple laptops ensures that if there ever is a hardware failure work can still be carried out while repairs take place.

6.1.2. Disaster aversion

There are seemingly endless ways to damage or lose data in the modern age, some or all of which can be averted with the help of properly operational back up strategies. These threats include, but are not limited to: Hardware damage, Theft, Loss of passwords, Out of date software, Servers going down, Services stop running, Electrical surges, Malicious hacking (see Appendix 9.6), Accidental deletion, Hard drive formatting and Viruses [18].

According to Paul Le Messurier, operations manager for a data recovery specialist service, “Hard disk drive (HDD) crashes on desktop and laptop PCs continue to be responsible for the highest volumes of data loss by UK businesses and home users. Two thirds (67%) of respondents to our research said that HDD crashes caused data loss, compared with 14% who blamed human error and 10% who said software failure was responsible. [19]”

The best method to ensure data is protected through such a failure or incident is to have multiple backups, kept apart to ensure the likelihood of a failure happening to each backup concurrently is extremely unlikely. An online backup prevents any hardware failings, and an external hard drive protects against a server crashes or online storage going offline. The adoption of SSDs over hard drives can also help protect data, as only 13% of UK user reported data losses from SSDs, compared to 74% from traditional hard drives [19].

6.2. Time Management

6.2.1. Increasing Productivity

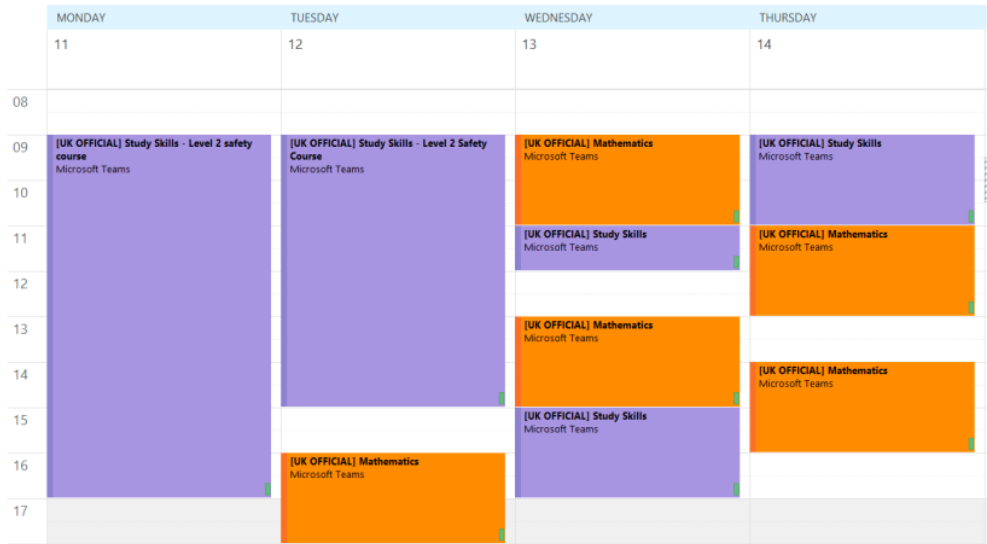
Time management is an essential part of organisation and productivity. A study of the effect of implementing time management strategies in the 1980's found evidence that suggested a correlation between implementing time management strategies and higher GPA values [20]. Failure to properly manage the time available can result in higher stress levels, missed deadlines and inefficient workflow [21]. While there is a lot of advice online for ways to increase productivity and self-organisation, it is important to acknowledge not every method will work for each person, methods need to be tailored to the individual. Motivation must come from the person, otherwise techniques that would be otherwise help can become ignored or even distracting.

With that in mind, one method to improve organisation would be proper calendar blocking. Being able to fully see and comprehend one's commitments and the time available for projects can give a more realistic look at project planning, as well as improve work life balance [22]. The author's university can be seen in figure 9, showing an example of blocking.

Another time management technique are S.M.A.R.T. action plans for short term and long term goals. Providing specific and measurable steps towards the ultimate goal makes it easier to follow through on those steps when compared to generic and vague markers of progress. Examples of S.M.A.R.T. goals can be found in section 5 of this report.

Further, the NHS recommends easy time-management tips to help regain control of peoples' days. They recommend establishing a clear set of goals, making a list of tasks, focusing on results, taking regular breaks and prioritising important tasks [23].

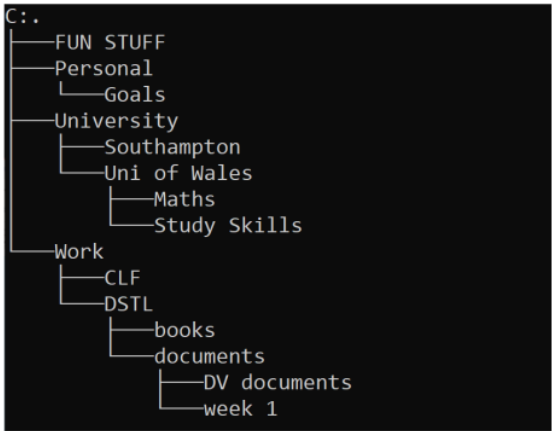
Figure 9: Outlook Calendar with blocking



6.2.2. E-Portfolio

As previously mentioned, one method of data loss is human error. Typically, this will be through accidental deletion, but another way in which the data can be lost is file becoming unfindable within a company’s or user’s files. A well organised file system with clear distinctions can help alleviate the chances of files becoming ‘buried’ within subfolders. Figure 10 shows the user’s own file organisation, with clear separation between their personal files, university files from both their universities, and their professional files for various employers. This organisational system is kept consistent between the various data backups and online file storage methods outlined in section 6.1.

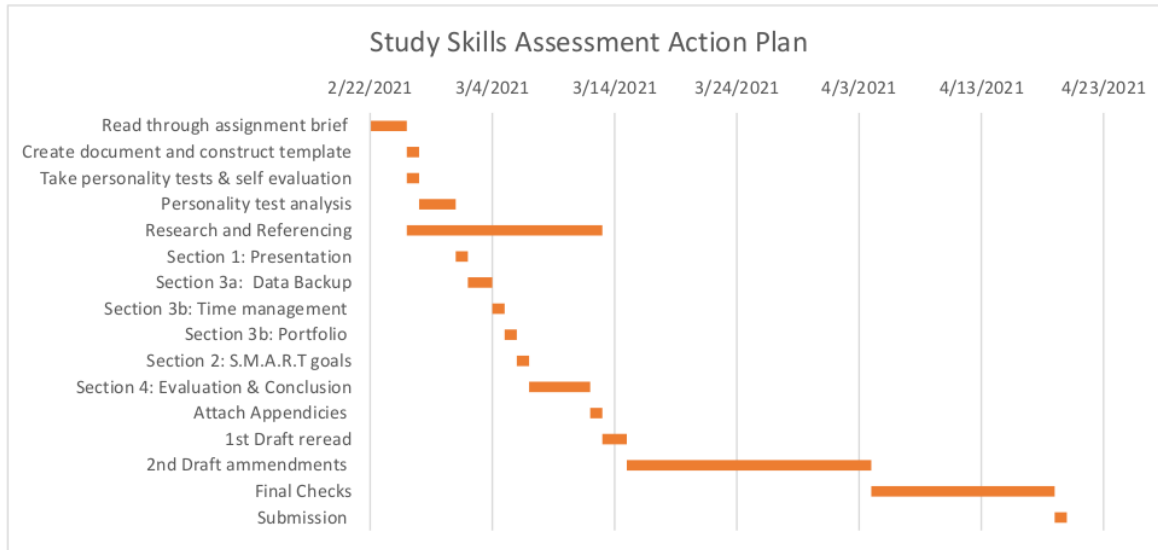
Figure 10: A File Directory with segmented files



6.2.3. Assignment Action Plan

As an example of time management skills put into practice, an action plan was created for this report prior to starting the assignment. This action plan identified the key tasks and milestones for completing the assignment, working backwards from the submission date to assign an ideal duration for each task. This action plan also factors in the author's other commitments to their employer, which is why most tasks are condensed to university time, while those tasks attempted during work time are significantly longer, to accommodate higher priority tasks. Figure 11 shows the breakdown of this action plan in the form of a Gantt chart. The full Action plan is seen in appendix [9.5](#).

Figure 11: Assessment Action Plan



7. Conclusion

Contained within this report are a multitude of techniques and advice for better applying oneself to a studying environment. Key concerns of data loss and time management were addressed, with guidance to help working towards a set goal and self-improvement. This report found reason to doubt the validity of personality quiz results and the Myers-Briggs method, but recognises the advice given can be beneficial, if generic. Moving forward, this report recommends further reading into organisational methods and time management skills, as the methods outlined in this report are but some of many potential methods. While all these methods may help adaptation to university, it is impossible to remove all stress and issues from the experience due to the challenging nature of university itself.

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9. Appendix

9.1. Full speech accompanying presentation.

"Hello, my name is Stan collins, and this is my introductory PowerPoint

So, a bit of background on me, I'm from Burgess Hill, a town near Brighton, went to University of Southampton studying marine engineering, which was a bit of a gamble in that I'd never worked with boats before, but it worked out and I now work for DSTL as an OME apprentice

My hobbies that have kept me busy through the lockdowns are baking, drawing, films and running. Like Gareth I too signed up for parkrun, mostly to try and fight off all the cinnamon rolls I keep making. My drawings are more akin to doodles, but it's a nice creative outlet. My father got me

invested into both football and films, so we try to keep up to date both on new releases and our fantasy football league.

Here are a few doodles that I'm more proud of, the ones that have made it to the lofty highs of my Instagram.

My likes and dislike you can see now on the screen. As previously mentioned, my dad got me into football, so I'm regularly listening in on the radio when I can. I am a lover of good books and films, so I'm missing the cinema quite a lot. Despite making my best efforts to make a home cinema room, it's not quite the same. On a similar vein, my biggest current dislike would be the cancellation of all of my booked concerts and festivals I had planned, although I imagine I am hardly alone in that regard. The constant pushing back of a spa day I had booked is becoming a painful recurring part of my life now.

As was requested, I avoided taking any serious personality tests, but then was faced with the daunting task of having to think about myself, so instead I decided to ask the person that knew me best. Naturally, I asked buzzfeed, which told me a whole load of things about myself, including that my favourite candle scent is eucalyptus. All this should tell you that I have an easy-going personality, I'm light hearted and have a huge amount of dedication, especially to silly bits like this.

In terms of strengths and weaknesses, I like to think I'm a people person. I've had multiple jobs and roles throughout my life, and took to each one thanks to my ability to adapt and bond with the people around me. I honestly believe that the only reason I have gotten this far in life is that I've really wanted it, that desire an enthusiasm has pushed me on.

My weaknesses would unironically be spelling, something I never really mastered, and spell check made even worse, never been the fastest typer, I can burn out on occasions where I really push myself, id say that was a flaw. I don't know if body failings like migraines could count as a weakness but I get those pretty bad sometimes, but I digress.

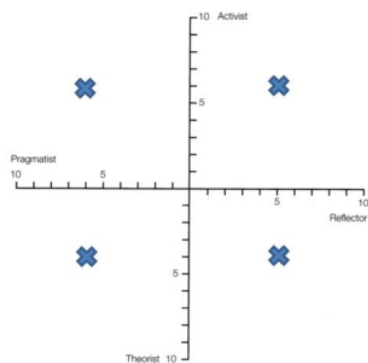
Finally, what do I want from this course? Having no background in OME, I'm mostly looking forward to starting a-new. As much as I enjoyed marine engineering, it was all theory and very little application, so going into a new field that is more hands on is ideal. OME obviously isn't something you can have a huge background in before you start, so that desire to build from the ground up was the main draw for me.

Like my fellow DSTL new starters this is the start of our 5 year course, so in 5 years' time we will have just finished and will be full time staff. I could pretend that I know what I want to be in that time, what department I want to be in or new tech frontier I want to be spearheading, but I think focussing on where I want to go makes you lose focus on the journey of getting there, which is the bit that really defines who you end up being. In short terms, I have no idea, but I'm going to have a good time figuring that out over the next half decade.

Thank you for listening, this is me and my dad, thought I should have at least one photo of me in there. Any Questions?"

9.2. Honey & Mumford Learning Styles

Activist	Reflector	Theorist	Pragmatist
2 X	11	1 X	4 X
5 X	12 X	3	7 X
8	16	6	9
15	18 X	10	14 X
19 X	21	13	20 X
23 X	25	17	24
26	29	22 X	27
35 X	30 X	28 X	31
36	32 X	38 X	34 X
40 X	33 X	39	37X
Total: 6	Total: 5	Total: 4	Total: 6



9.3. Self-Evaluation of Academic skills

Self Evaluation of Academic Skills

Thinking about yourself, read and mark each statement out of 5, with 5 being 'Totally Agree' and 1 being 'Totally Disagree'. If a statement doesn't apply to you, leave it blank.

Skill					
	5	4	3	2	1
I have the confidence to try new things and express my ideas		X			
I am self motivated and will persevere with difficult tasks				X	
I am organised and can meet set deadlines				X	
I am able to find information from different resources easily	X				
I can read complicated texts and understand the general meaning	X				
I am able to select what is relevant and what is irrelevant in text	X				
I can compare different opinions and decide what are the best grounds for deciding who is right		X			
I can write things in my own words			X		
I am able to reflect and evaluate my own work				X	
I have good strategies for starting a new task/assignment		X			
I have good time management skills and can organise my workload effectively					X
I am able to make, store and find my notes					X
I am able to manage a range of writing skills appropriately		X			
I am able to think critically and analytically, and evaluate arguments	X				
I have good memory strategies	X				
I know how to use IT to help academic study	X				
I am confident at preparing and delivering oral presentations	x				

9.4. Self-evaluation Action Plan

Strengths, <u>skills</u> and qualities		
1. Trying new things		
2. Analytical readings of texts		
3. Oral presentations		
4. Researching and sourcing new topics		
What I need to work on, develop or improve		
1. Organisation		
2. Note keeping		
3. Self-motivation		
4. Self-evaluation		
My Priorities: What I am going to do, When and How		
What?	When?	How?
1.Organise working space	03/03/21	Clear desk of non-essentials
2.Establish noting system	Within a week	Buy dedicated notebook/folder for notes
3. Attempt to improve mental health	Over the year	Meditation and self-improvement
4.Research <u>self-evaluation</u> techniques	Over the next month	Google
How will I measure if I have improved?		
1. Check to see if desk remains clean after a week		
2. Check to see if I can find my notes for revision before next exam		
3. Reflect on motivation across the last year		
4. Reflect on self-evaluation, how often am I rewriting etc.		

9.5. Assessment Action Plan

Tasks	Start date	Duration	End date
Read through assignment brief	22/02/2021	3	25/02/2021
Create document and construct template	25/02/2021	1	26/02/2021
Take personality tests & self evaluation	25/02/2021	1	26/02/2021
Personality test analysis	26/02/2021	3	01/03/2021
Research and Referencing	25/02/2021	16	13/03/2021
Section 1: Presentation	01/03/2021	1	02/03/2021
Section 3a: Data Backup	02/03/2021	2	04/03/2021
Section 3b: Time management	04/03/2021	1	05/03/2021
Section 3b: Portfolio	05/03/2021	1	06/03/2021
Section 2: S.M.A.R.T goals	06/03/2021	1	07/03/2021
Section 4: Evaluation & Conclusion	07/03/2021	5	12/03/2021
Attach Appendices	12/03/2021	1	13/03/2021
1st Draft reread	13/03/2021	2	15/03/2021
2nd Draft ammendments	15/03/2021	20	04/04/2021
Final Checks	04/04/2021	15	19/04/2021
Submission	19/04/2021	1	20/04/2021

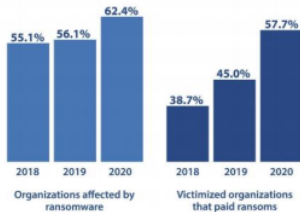
9.6. RansomWare Report



Ransomware Report
Stan Collins
2022429
29/01/21

1

Percentage of Organizations Affected by One or More Successful Ransomware Attacks and the Percentage of Victimized Organizations That Paid Associated Ransoms



Source: 2020 Cyberthreat Defense Report, CyberEdge Group

How to be infected

The most common way to be infected with ransomware is through email spam, often containing links to infected sites, or attachments that, when opened, will install the ransomware onto the device [4]. These emails rely on social engineering to be successful, often posing as being from legitimate sources, like banks or government bodies, or by imitating familiarity as to be mistaken for an email sent by a friend or colleague.

Another method of infection is malicious advertising, ads that when clicked on redirect users to infected sites. Advertising like this can be found all over the internet, even on more traditionally trustworthy sites [4].

What to do if infected

Most victims of Ransomware only realise they have been infected with malware when the ransom note appears, by which time it is too late to save to encrypted files. The ransom note itself will demand payment by a certain date, often in online currency such as bitcoin, which if not met will increase the cost of decryption.

A recent report by the CyberEdge Group found that only 19% of ransomware victims who paid their ransoms ever got the files back [5]. Some did get decryption sent to them by the hackers, however the majority were then left without money and the files. As such, it is this report's recommendation to never pay the ransom. This advice is seconded by the FBI, who issued a statement on the spreading of ransomware and the actions to take when infected.

3

Contents

Introduction	2
Ransomware:	2
Who is targeted by ransomware	2
How to be infected	3
What to do if infected	3
CryptoWall	4
How to prevent Cryptowall attacks	4
Back up files regularly	4
Install Anti-virus software	4
Keeping computers patched	4
Conclusion	4
References	5

Introduction

Cyber-attacks are becoming more common as more and more businesses rely on and are connected to the internet. With each new advancement in software and hardware comes new vulnerabilities. The scale and number of different threats facing businesses can at times be daunting, ranging from phishing emails to targeted DDoS attacks. This report outlines the threat to personal data from ransomware, specifically the ransomware CryptoWall, and how to avoid losing data when attacked.

Ransomware:

A form of malware often bought off the dark web, ransomware is a payload that encrypts users' data until payment is made for a decryption key. Threats can also be made to release copied versions of files unless a ransom is paid. The malware often comes in the form of Trojans or viruses, attaching itself to other downloaded files, then self-replicating on infected systems.

Who is targeted by ransomware

Prior to the 2017 WannaCry attack on NHS, ransomware was primarily targeted at individuals; however this attack marked a global shift towards organisations becoming the new targets [1]. By 2018, 81% of the victims of ransomware attacks were organisations [2]. A report by Cyberbridge group found that 80% of organisations received a cyber attack in 2020, and 62% of organisation reported being affected by ransomware. A worrying emerging trend is that more organisations are paying the ransoms, up nearly 20% from 2018 to 58% in 2020, perhaps fuelling the rise in reported cases in ransomware [3].

2

The only reliable way to restore the encrypted files would be to restore a backup of your files. As such, prevention and regular backups of files are a better way of combating ransomware than trying to decrypt the infected files. If caught early, the computer can be restarted in safe mode and scanned by antivirus software to remove the ransomware, but this is a rare occurrence.

CryptoWall

CryptoWall is a form of ransomware program that encrypts files found on infected hard drives. Although multiple versions of the ransomware exist, currently running up to version 5.1, each version fundamentally does the same thing, find and encrypt files, sometimes even encrypting the names of the files themselves [6]. When the encryption is finished, a ransom note is sent to the user demanding payment to decrypt the files. The CryptoWall ransomware targets file originating from the infected device or system, predicting these to be of more value to the user and the hardest to replace.

How to prevent Cryptowall attacks

There are a number of methods to prevent CryptoWall attacks from damaging your files:

Back up files regularly

Ensuring regular backups of data means that whatever files are lost to encryption are easily replaceable. Multiple backups are recommended, so it is possible to back up and already encrypted file, after which it is essentially lost. Backups on cloud-based services also include elements of encryption, so users' files are more protected there, as there has been a rise in cases of malware that delete any back up data it finds [7].

Install Anti-virus software

Most anti-virus software can recognise commonly user ransomware and blacklist them from ever downloading onto user's computers. Regular updates are required to stop newer ransomware slipping through.

Keeping computers patched

Ransomware often relies on vulnerabilities in computer software, which themselves are constantly being patched by the software provider. A common factor in many data breaches are antiquated software or older systems that are no longer being updated by their provider, as such these systems should be replaced with newer models.

Conclusion

The best defence against ransomware and CryptoWall is to ensure that back ups are made of any and all valuable data. Backups protect not only against ransomware attacks but also many other types of data loss, whereas paying up the ransom may only sometimes grant access to the encrypted files. Waiting until an attack has already happened before trying to take back ups or counter measures is too late, as the files will be gone, and any back ups will still include the encryption.

4

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Study Skills Stan Collins

GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

78/100

PAGE 1

PAGE 2

PAGE 3

PAGE 4

PAGE 5

PAGE 6

PAGE 7

PAGE 8

PAGE 9

PAGE 10

PAGE 11

PAGE 12

PAGE 13

PAGE 14

PAGE 15

PAGE 16

PAGE 17

PAGE 18

PAGE 19

GRADING FORM: SMU GENERIC_GJ

STAN JOSEPH COLLINS

389

RESEARCH-INFORMED LITERATURE



Excellent use of a wide range of research sources extending far beyond simply using the links provided

80

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING



Excellent level of understanding demonstrated in the majority of areas covered.

80

ANALYSIS



Excellent level of personal analysis applied to the gathered information, with all required areas covered and extending beyond simply presenting

75

the data obtained. Weaker analysis of the data loss scenarios though - doesn't really do what the brief asked for in terms of explaining exactly what you would need to do to recover your system, how long this might take etc.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION AND DEP.



Good level of content to show that all the various aspects have been attempted, with no major areas omitted. You have described what hardware/services you intend to use for your backups, however you haven't really described a STRATEGY in enough detail – how EXACTLY will the work get backed up? How will you ensure it happens? How will you test the integrity of the backup etc etc

74

SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRAC.



Generally very well laid out and presented. Excellent use of formatting and breaking the report down into sensible nested numbered sections.

80