



# Usable Security

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Cyber Security  
can only be  
achieved in  
partnership with  
users.



# What is Usability?

ISO 9241-210

“Usability: The extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use.”

## Definition Identifies How to Proceed:

### What to measure

- Users
- Goals
- Context of Use

### How to measure

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Satisfaction

# 1<sup>st</sup> Tenet of Usability: Know thy User!

Many different user groups:

- Policy Makers/Corporate decision makers/investors
- Cyber Security researchers/developers/implementers
- CIO's and those who implement cyber within an organization
- End users

# Set out to understand our end users?

We found our end users:

- Don't have a good mental model of security or privacy
- Are overwhelmed with passwords

# What We Did

Interviewed 40 people about:

- Experiences with online privacy and/or security
- Use of mental models as they think about privacy and/or security in the online environment

Gender	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Total
Males	4	1	2	9	3	19
Females	5	6	6	2	2	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>40</b>

Area	HS	Some College	BA/BS	BA+	MA/MS	JD/PhD/MD
Central PA	0	2	6	2	2	1
DC Metro	2	5	16	1	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>

# Numbers Couldn't Tell the Whole Story

## **Quantitative analysis didn't account for the richness of the data**

- *Example: 31 out of 40 said that hackers, bad guys, and cybercriminals were a concern*
- This doesn't tell us why they believe this, what it is based on, what their experiences were.

## **Qualitative analysis provided a more nuanced view of the data**

- *Example: some had a mental model of a hacker as someone who sat in their basement doing nefarious things*
- Context, perceptions, and experiences were more visible.

# Mental Models, Privacy, & Security

- Mental Model: “simplified internal concept of how something works in the real world”.<sup>1</sup>
  - Generality, generativity, guidance of skills, organization of information
- Previous research used Mental Models from the physical world to explain user perceptions of privacy and security. <sup>2,3</sup>

1. Asgharpour, P., Liu, D., and Camp, L.J.: Mental models of computer security risks. WOODSTOCK '97. EI Paso TX, (1997)
2. Camp, L. J. (2006). Mental models of privacy and security. Available at SSRN 922735.
3. Wash, R.: Folk models of home computer security. In Proceedings of the Sixth Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security. Redmond WA: ACM. p. 1-16, (2010)

# What are user's views of Cyber-Security ?

## Participants have Multiple Mental Models

- Brave New World
  - Good 'Ole Days
  - No Privacy
- Fatalistic
- Little Value
- Maintenance
- Not My Job
- Optimistic
- Reputation
- Verification

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# I Can't Keep Up

Brave New World Model: Pace, types, and consequences of interactions have all changed:

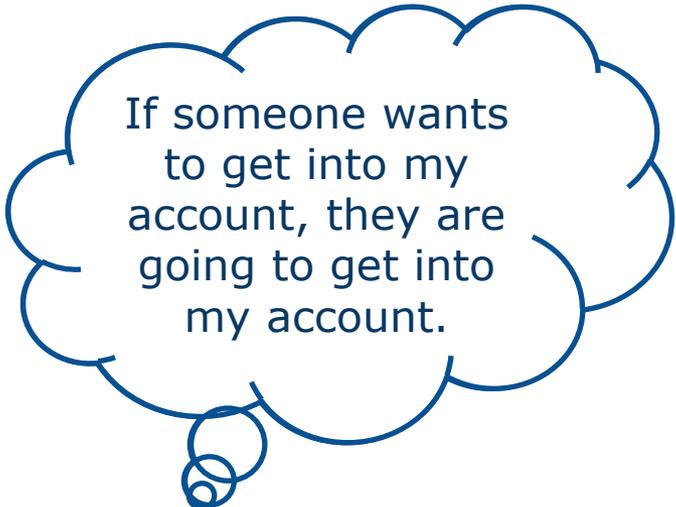
- No Privacy

A blue-outlined thought bubble with a scalloped edge and a small tail at the bottom. It contains text about network privacy.

If you go on the network for any reason privacy is eliminated. The network is open to the entire world.

# It Doesn't Matter What I Do

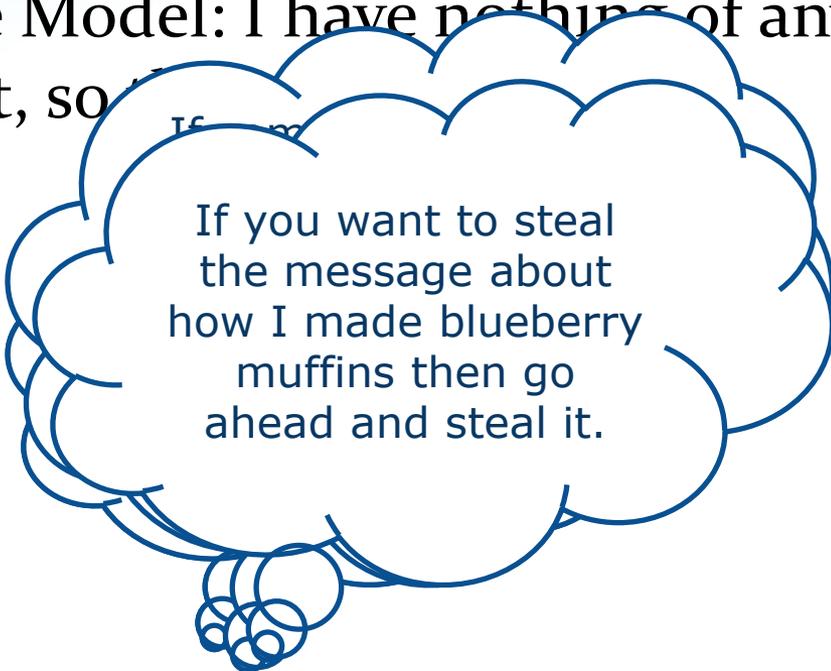
Fatalistic Model: a sense of resignation and immunity to worry.

A blue-outlined thought bubble with a scalloped edge and a small tail at the bottom. It contains the text: "If someone wants to get into my account, they are going to get into my account."

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# Who Wants a Blueberry Muffin Recipe?

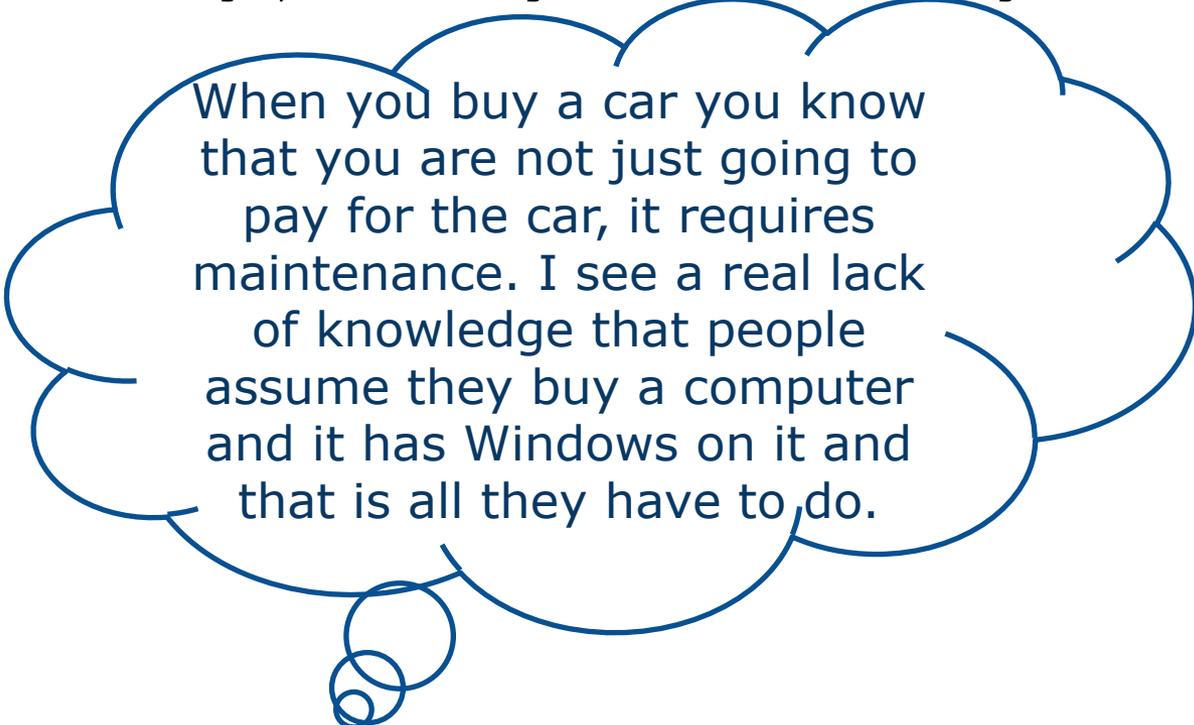
Little Value Model: I have nothing of any value that others would want, so

A blue-outlined thought bubble with a scalloped edge and a tail of three small circles at the bottom. It contains the text: "If you want to steal the message about how I made blueberry muffins then go ahead and steal it." data-bbox="215 380 645 850"/>

If you want to steal  
the message about  
how I made blueberry  
muffins then go  
ahead and steal it.

## It's Like an Oil Change

Maintenance Model: You need to take care of your computer to ensure security, just like you take care of your car.

A large, hand-drawn style thought bubble with a blue outline. It has several smaller circles at the bottom, suggesting a trail of thought. The text inside is in a dark blue, sans-serif font.

When you buy a car you know that you are not just going to pay for the car, it requires maintenance. I see a real lack of knowledge that people assume they buy a computer and it has Windows on it and that is all they have to do.

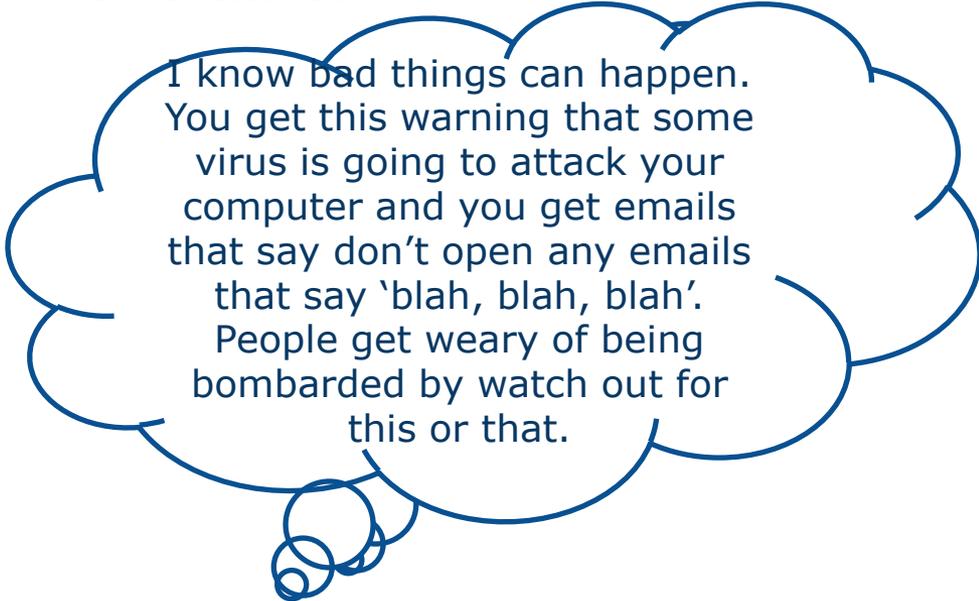
# Whose Responsibility Is It Anyway?

Not My Job Model: the responsibility for privacy and security belongs to someone else (e.g., work, IT, the bank, the website...).



# Nothing to Hide, Nothing to Fear

Optimistic Model: everything is fine since nothing bad has happened to me to date.

A blue-outlined thought bubble with a tail pointing downwards and to the left. The text inside is in a blue, sans-serif font.

I know bad things can happen. You get this warning that some virus is going to attack your computer and you get emails that say don't open any emails that say 'blah, blah, blah'. People get weary of being bombarded by watch out for this or that.

## It's What I Know

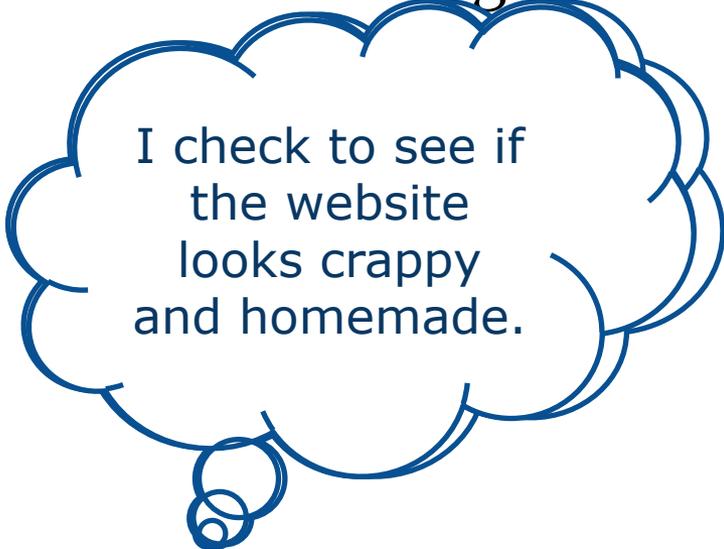
Reputation Model: Knowing and trusting a specific site or brand because of its size or a previous physical relationship.

A blue-outlined thought bubble with a scalloped edge and a small tail at the bottom. It contains the text: "I just try to buy from certain places that I have heard of, reputable sites."

I just try to buy from certain places that I have heard of, reputable sites.

## More Information Please

Verification Model: Something sets off a trigger that induces the need for additional checking.

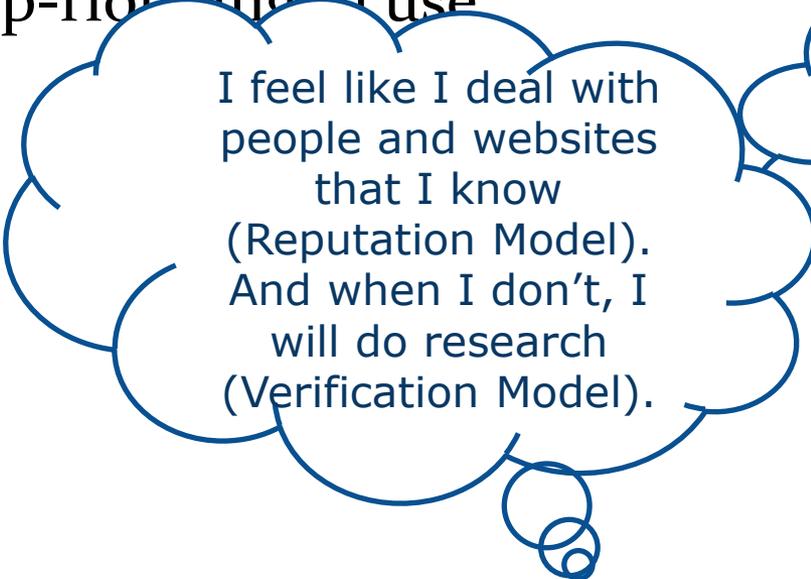
A blue-outlined thought bubble with a scalloped edge and a small tail at the bottom. It contains the text: "I check to see if the website looks crappy and homemade."

I check to see if  
the website  
looks crappy  
and homemade.

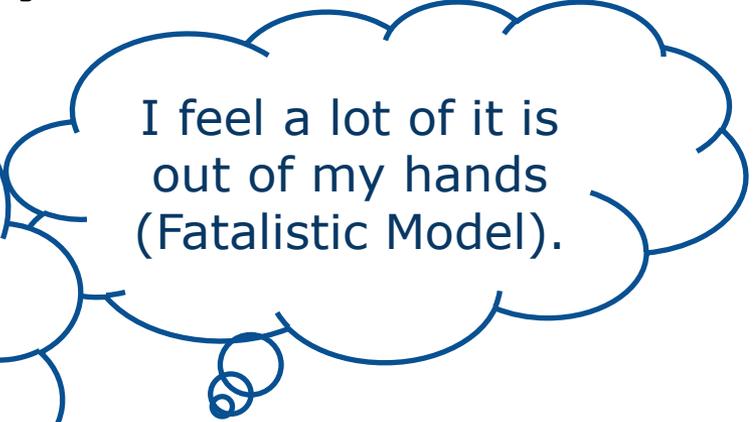
# Painting the Picture of Privacy & Security

## Drawing on Multiple Mental Models:

- Partially formed, contradictory, based on misinformation
- Flip-flopping in use

A blue-outlined thought bubble with a tail pointing towards the bottom right. It contains text describing a 'Reputation Model' and a 'Verification Model'.

I feel like I deal with  
people and websites  
that I know  
(Reputation Model).  
And when I don't, I  
will do research  
(Verification Model).

A blue-outlined thought bubble with a tail pointing towards the bottom left. It contains text describing a 'Fatalistic Model'.

I feel a lot of it is  
out of my hands  
(Fatalistic Model).

# Our research supports the NIST Computer Security Organization

- Password research results will inform the upcoming NIST SP 800-63-2 revision
  - Policies in plain language
  - Appropriate formatting and ordering
  - Expiry, 3 strikes you're out
  - Type of devices (desktop, mobile)
- Password and Authentication Research supports and informs the NSTIC program
- Mental models supports and informs the NICE and NCCoE programs

## Secure in practice not just in theory

Making it easy to do the right thing, hard to do the wrong thing and easy to recover gracefully when the wrong thing happens

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