

# DATA ENTRY: CATCHING MISTAKES

Clare Dingley, University of Minnesota, Morris,  
registrar and director, Office of the Registrar

Tina Falkner, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities,  
director, Compliance and Continuity

Judy Korn, University of Minnesota, Morris,  
transfer evaluation coordinator, Office of the Registrar

UMACRAO 2013  
October 28  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

# IS THE ACCURACY OF STUDENT RECORDS AT RISK?

- More responsibilities
- Fewer staff
- Interruptions, sometimes caused by good customer service
- Expectations of immediate response/service

# CONSEQUENCES OF INACCURACIES?

- Upset and/or confused students
- Upset and/or confused staff and faculty
- Time: tracking down the error and correcting
- Time: responding to misinformation
- Time: not progressing on other projects
- Time: in dollars

**BEST PRACTICES  
TO COUNTER  
RISKS**

# BEST PRACTICES TO COUNTER RISKS



## **INTERRUPTIONS: THE URGE TO IMMEDIATELY RESPOND**

**If feasible, use voice and email messaging systems to “block out” email, chats, and phone conversations for part of the day.**

**Tell co-workers you need uninterrupted time.**

# BEST PRACTICES TO COUNTER RISKS



**UNCOMFORTABLE PHYSICAL  
WORK SETTING**

**Use a comfortable, ergonomically  
correct chair.**

**Know and apply simple ergonomic  
techniques to reduce strain.**

**(Pain or worry about one's back  
can reduce focus.)**



# BEST PRACTICES TO COUNTER RISKS



**DISTRACTIONS:**  
**Friendly co-workers,**  
**(as we would hope!)**

**Good relationships nurture a healthy working environment, but excessive nonwork related conversations, phone calls, etc. are inappropriate for any work environment, especially one that requires concentration and accuracy.**

**Set office expectations for nonwork related conversations, phone calls, etc.**

# BEST PRACTICES TO COUNTER RISKS



## **DISTRACTIONS:**

**Office action, ringing phones,  
conversations, people  
stopping by to ask questions,  
etc.**

**Use headphones or ear buds.**

**Close the door.**





# BEST PRACTICES TO COUNTER RISKS



## **Multi-tasking:**

**Yes, this positive characteristic can be a risk.**

**Be aware of the line between productive multi-tasking and just plain doing too much at once, diminishing accuracy and effectiveness.**

**Tell co-workers you need uninterrupted time.**

# BEST PRACTICES TO COUNTER RISKS



## Deadlines and speed



**Rushing leads to errors.**

**Set realistic deadlines.**

**Be self aware of self-imposed factors that may lead to a sense of urgency.**

# BEST PRACTICES TO COUNTER RISKS



**Long periods at the computer**

**While unplanned distractions and interruptions may decrease accuracy, a planned break during long periods of computer work may increase productivity and accuracy.**



# BEST PRACTICES TO COUNTER RISKS



- **Training**
- **Procedures**
- **Documentation**

AND FINALLY, THE BIGGEST RISK...

# Human Error

...caused by an uncomfortable work environment, interruptions, distractions, multi-tasking, OR by just the way the brain works.

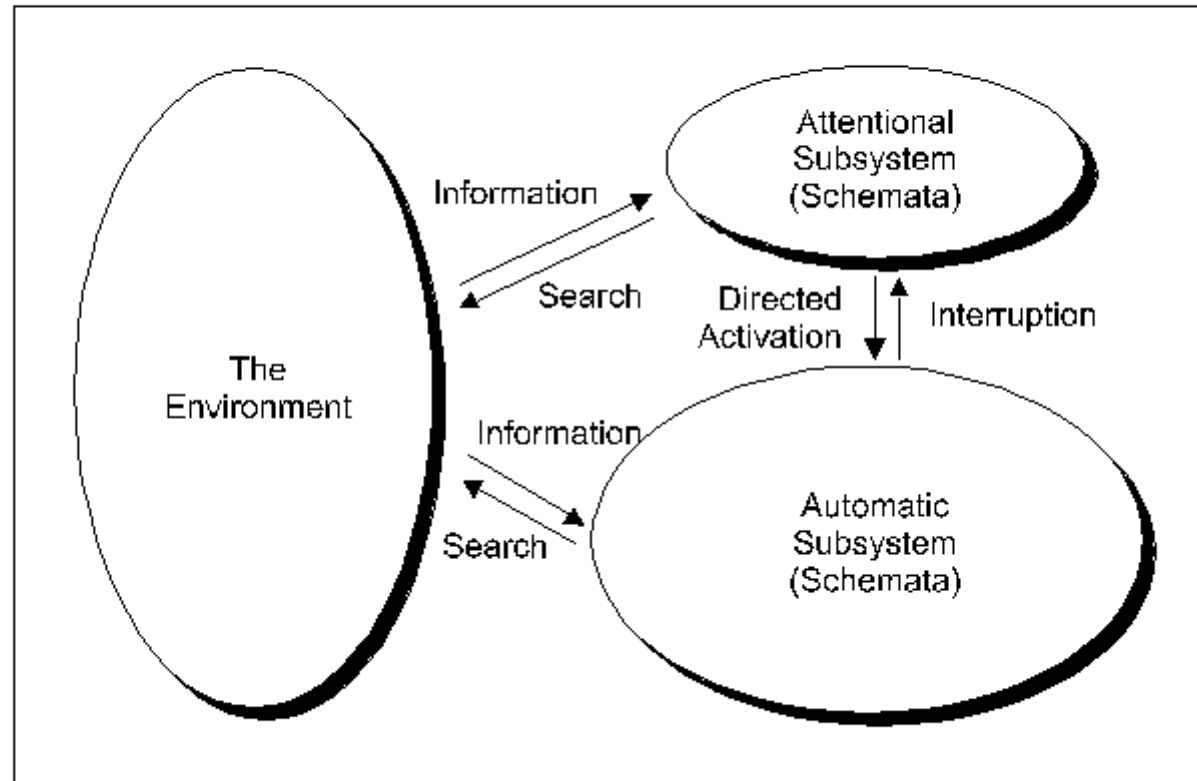
# “TO ERR IS HUMAN...”

In the 1700s, poet Alexander Pope expressed this thought in *An Essay on Criticism*.

Today, scientific evidence supports his poetic words.

Raymond Panko, University of Hawaii professor, and other researchers in the study of human error have found that the way our brains work make it impossible to NOT make errors.

Figure 1: Emerging Model of Cognition



**Wrking ta a unversty or  
colege is hte mst  
wundreful carer in het  
wrld! The stdents ar  
wundreful. The facte is  
wunderful. The stf si  
wundrefl. I knw tht yu  
mst fel hte same wy. Wat  
grate livs we leed!**

**A TEST OF  
YOUR BRAIN!**

**Schemas in  
action!**



# DO WE HAVE TIME TO CHECK FOR ERRORS?



**Yes! We can't  
afford not to  
check our work!**



Everyone makes errors! Three to five percent of our work!

# TIPS AND TRICKS: CHECKING FOR ERRORS

# TIPS AND TRICKS

- Know the most common types of errors and watch for them.
  - Transcription errors
    - Examples:
      - Clare Dingy instead of Clare Dingley
      - Judy Corn instead of Judy Korn
      - inputting the data in twice
      - “stubby fingers”
      - hard to decipher original document, misinterpretation
  - Transposition errors
    - Examples:
      - Tina Falknre instead of Tina Falkner
      - 12.13.13 instead of 12.31.13

# TIPS AND TRICKS

- **Verification: proofreading**
- **Validation: incomplete, format checks, range checks**

# TIPS AND TRICKS

- **Read out loud**
- **Review backwards**
- **Point**
- **Set up reports that find errors**
- **Do occasional audits**

# TIPS AND TRICKS

**Challenge yourself and your co-workers to imagine errors in everything you and they do to heighten awareness of mistakes and make corrections early in the process.**

**Keep a list of your most common errors.**

**“...TO FORGIVE IS DIVINE.”**

“Because human error is not avoidable, it should not be considered blameful. Fagan [1976] emphasized that blaming makes people defensive and harms error detection and correction. The correct attitude is that error is inevitable and that only a stance that rejects blamefulness is likely to be effective.”

**Panko, Raymond R., *Theories of Human Error*, 2008**



# ALONG WITH FORGIVENESS...

- Offer positive feedback.
- Provide encouragement.
- Reinforce the importance of the work we do on behalf of university students, faculty, and staff.



YOUR  
STORIES  
AND  
SOLUTIONS

# RESOURCES

- Panko, Raymond R. University of Hawaii, *Theories of Human Error 2008*
- <http://panko.shidler.hawaii.edu/HumanErr/Theory.htm>
- morgueFile, online images  
<http://www.morguefile.com/>

Clare Dingley - [strandcd@umn.edu](mailto:strandcd@umn.edu)

Tina Falkner - [rovic001@umn.edu](mailto:rovic001@umn.edu)

Judy Korn - [kornjr@umn.edu](mailto:kornjr@umn.edu)