Third-Party Security Awareness Training Tools

A Higher Education Information Security Council (HEISC) Resource

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What Is a Third-Party Security Awareness Training Tool?
Vendors (third parties) develop security awareness training tools for educational and noneducational institutions. Higher education institutions may use a third-party security training program for faculty, staff, and students. These tools typically include components or modules on security and privacy issues such as data protection or compliance (with, for example, HIPAA, FERPA, or PCI).

Who Might Use a Third-Party Security Awareness Training Tool, and Why?
Generally the IT department, information security or privacy office, or HR staff development will purchase a third-party security awareness training tool that can be delivered through the institution’s learning management system (LMS) or the vendor’s training dashboard.

The Benefits of Using a Third-Party Security Awareness Training Tool
Using a third-party tool allows the institution to focus on its educational outreach to the community. Developing security awareness training materials in-house may be time intensive and require a great deal of resources, including multiple security or privacy domain experts.

Risks to Consider When Using a Third-Party Security Awareness Training Tool
Institutions have less control over the content if they purchase a tool with predeveloped components or modules. Customization may or may not be possible. Most tools are SCORM-compliant but may not be compatible with an institution’s LMS.

Vendors may not have well-developed data-protection and data-retention policies. Depending on the third-party education program, institutions may have to closely manage users’ progress, which could be time consuming.

List of Technologies and Tools That a User Might Consider
Below is a list of popular third-party security awareness training tools that an institution might consider implementing. Institutions should evaluate which tool works best for their unique purposes. Neither EDUCAUSE nor HEISC recommends the use of a particular tool; institutions should use these tools at their own risk.¹

- SANS: Securing The Human²
- Skillsoft
- TeachPrivacy
- Trustwave

² The REN-ISAC offers an aggregate purchasing program for SANS training.
- Wombat Security Technologies
- In-house IT compliance and security awareness training developed at New Mexico State University

Sustain and Improve Your Information Security Program
The Higher Education Information Security Council (HEISC) supports higher education institutions as they improve information security governance, compliance, data protection, and privacy programs. The HEISC Information Security Guide, created by practitioners for practitioners, features toolkits, case studies, effective practices, and recommendations to help jumpstart campus information security initiatives. Don’t reinvent the wheel—get the guide at educease.edu/security.