



Human Error

James Reason

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Modern technology has now reached a point where improved safety can only be achieved through a better understanding of human error mechanisms. In its treatment of major accidents, the book spans the disciplinary gulf between psychological theory and those concerned with maintaining the reliability of hazardous technologies. Much of the theoretical structure is new and original, and of particular importance is the identification of cognitive processes common to a wide variety of error types.

Human Error Details

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From Reader Review Human Error for online ebook

Jim Duncan says

A must read for anyone interested in how to improve the performance of any system that involves humans

Perry Johnson says

A difficult read but worth it to understand human error from the perspective of the cognitive psychologist. Reason is the author of the "Swiss Cheese Model" which holds that accidents are the result of the layering of latent failures on top of unsafe acts and local triggers. The book also details the difference between skill-based, rule-based, and knowledge-based error types and presents a theory of error forms which include frequency gambling and similarity matching. While there is little in the way of application, knowing the fundamentals is always a good first step. I suggest reading "Why We Make Mistakes" by Joe Hallinan first as it is a light, fun read which provides an overview of many of the topics in "Human Error". Then when you read this book you can draw connections to stories in Hallinan's text which make the psychology easier to understand.

D says

Fine book on errors and violations.

Distinguishing prior intention and intentional action (vs nonintentional or involuntary)

Cognitive Stage Primary Error Type

Planning Mistakes

Storage Lapses

Execution Slips

Activation

Specific activators - mental scratchpad

General activators - frequency of prior use

Boundary categories - Was there a prior intention to commit this particular violation?

If no, then erroneous or unintended violation

If yes, then sabotage

Routine violations - (a) natural tendency to take the path of least effort; and (b) a relatively indifferent environment (ie, one that rarely punishes violation or rewards observance)

Exceptional violations - tasks or circumstances that make violations inevitable no matter how well-intentioned the operators might be

Distinguishing between errors and violations - violations, like drinking and driving; close following;

disregarding speed limits; erroneous behavior: failing to see signs, failing to check mirrors, misjudging speed of oncoming vehicles.

Violations declined with age; errors did not.

Defences: The limited window of accident opportunity - personal safety equipment, guards preventing direct contact with dangerous materials or moving parts; engineering controls such as automatic safety devices and levels of containment

Unsafe acts - more than just an error or violation - one that is committed in the presence of a potential hazards: some mass, energy or toxicity that, if not properly control, could cause injury or damage.

Unintended Action

Slip

Attentional failures - Intrusion, Omission, Reversal, Misordering, Mistiming

Lapse

Memory failures - Omitting planned items; place-losing; forgetting intentions

Intended Action

Mistake

Mistake - Rule-based mistakes; knowledge-based mistakes

Violation

Routine violations, exceptional violations, acts of sabotage

Intelligent decision support systems

- Technical adviser
- Training improvements
- Computerized support systems

Olga Werby says

I'm very interested in exploring the origins of human errors. And this book by James Reason seemed liked a good read. I was about to travel and I didn't want to buy a paperback or a hardcover book--there are severe weight limitations for air travel. But I have a Kindle, and this book was available in the Kindle edition.

I should say that I tend not to write negative reviews. But in this case, I have to make an exception. Now my complaints are not with the content of the book. I wish it was written a bit better, but I knew what I was buying when I got the book. But I'm horrified at the number of typos in the Kindle edition! I assume the real-world-book doesn't have these (I hope). But every single page on the Kindle had a typo, or missing text, or strange characters, and so on. It was VERY frustrating reading the book (and nearly impossible to read the Appendixes). Clearly, Dr. Reason haven't given even a first look at how his book on Human Error was being rendered on the Kindle. To write a book about individual and systems failures and then to publish such a poor quality book is amazing to me.

If Amazon doesn't figure out the quality standards for Kindle editions, then there really isn't a point of taking a risk and buying these books in this format.

Ultimately, it is the author that is responsible for the quality of his book. I hope Dr. Reason will see this review and move his editors to make some very needed changes. Until then, DO NOT buy the Kindle version of this book--it's not worth the money!

So low star rating is for the Kindle edition...

Margaret Kulis says

Probably 3 1/2 stars. Some of this book was really interesting. I got a bit lost in the sections having to do with genetics, but for the most part, the writer made the scientific understandable. I learned more about evolution and random selection as well as history of early man.

Michel says

Bof. Een inleiding, maar het leest verouderd.

Glenna says

This book is probably one of the worst reads I have encountered. It is the basis of the most awkward workplace incident investigation and analysis methods I have ever used. After opening this book I understand why this analysis process is so cumbersome and ineffective. Visit the link for related information. http://www.asasi.org/2004_PPTs/Young%...

Bimus says

Proposes small theories on how we make mistakes that cause accidents. The cause of accidents are far more simple than we might expect but not as simple as human error to be done with.

Rhonda Sue says

This is a difficult read-unless you're studying for your doctorate in sociology or psychology-which I am not. I picked this book up after reading another one of the author's book on accidents which was a far easier read. However, I did get the basics on types of human errors and a general overview of the analyses used in the field-which are inconclusive. Humans will always make errors. We have moved along since this book was first published 1990, in finding the root causes of accidents in nuclear power and other hazardous industries. With modern tech, the march continues on.

Alex Railean says

This one is not as easy to read as regular prose, it is a dry scientific text with details of experiments and models. It is a good reference if you're researching human errors.

Chet Brandon says

Very detailed analysis of the human components of industrial accidents. The material has been around a while but it's still highly applicable to today's world of work. The modes of errors (GSM) theory has been picked up fairly recently and has become an important part of many progressive companies. Great book for practitioners focused on the human aspects of accident prevention.

Mark McGranaghan says

A solid review of the science underlying human error. More appropriate for those working on the science itself than practitioners looking to apply it.
