UM Graduate Student Research Conference (GradCon)

Apr 14th, 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

A Significant Threat to Neuropsychological Test Validity

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Introduction

- Test security is vital to the validity of neuropsychological assessment.

- Previous research in our lab has shown that 71% of participants use the Internet to prepare for neuropsychological evaluations (Kimpton, 2015).

- We investigated the availability of information related to neuropsychological tests on the Internet, a topic that has received little attention in the research literature.

Methods & Materials

- We decided a priori that we would not reveal the terms used in this Internet search, in order to avoid contributing to the problem of threatened test security.

- We used the Internet search engine "Google" to begin a search using a general question that a person with no neuropsychological expertise might use to access information on neuropsychological assessment.

- We obtained 899,000 results for this question.

- We chose to investigate only the first five of the 899,000 results.

- One link provided us with a list of 52 commonly used neuropsychological tests.

- This list also included information about the type of cognitive information the test was meant to assess, as well as strategies for successful test-taking.

- Lastly, we searched for the 52 tests on Google Images and YouTube in order to investigate the extent of available assessment information.

Results

- The protocols for 43% of the 52 tests were available on Google Images.

- At least partial administration demonstrations were available on YouTube for 54% of the 52 neuropsychological tests.

- These demonstrations revealed the test protocols and the basic strategy of the tests.

Protocols on Google Images

- Protocols Available
- Protocols Not Available
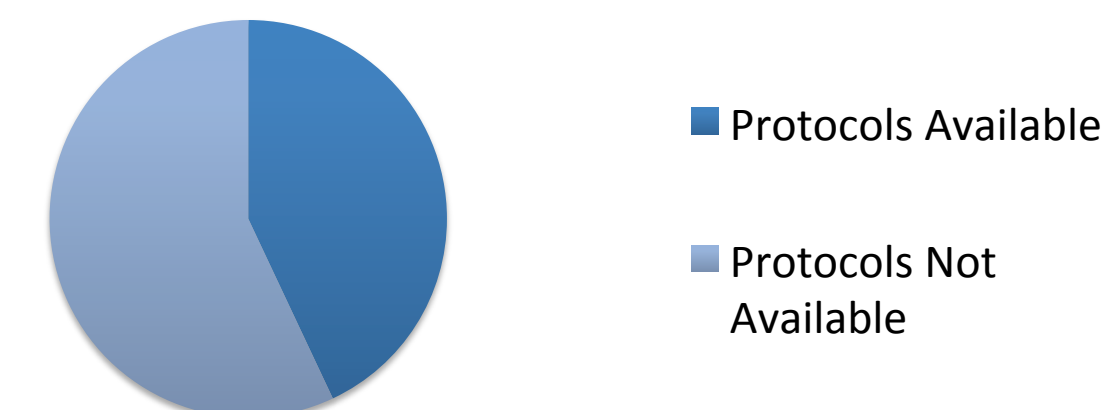
Administrations on YouTube

- Administration Demonstrations Available
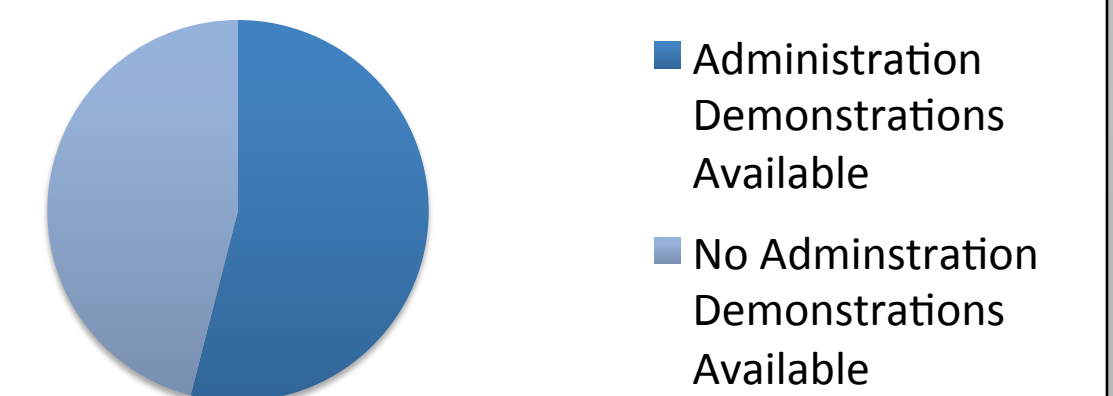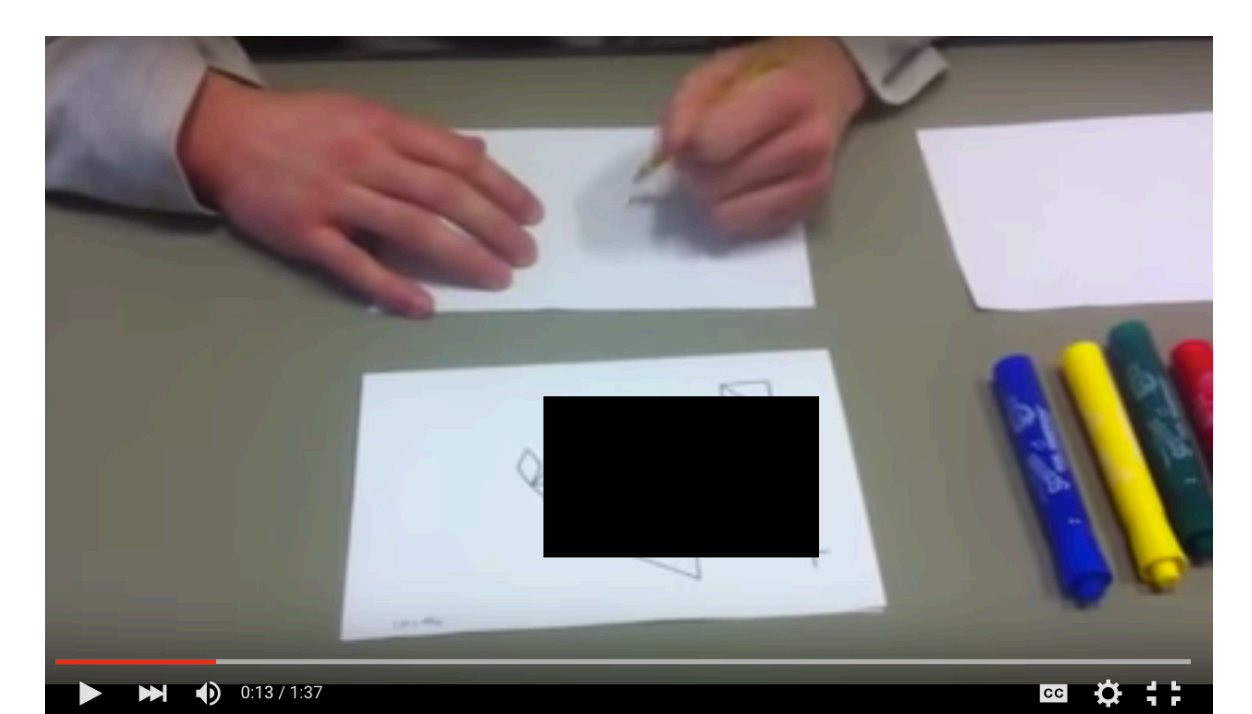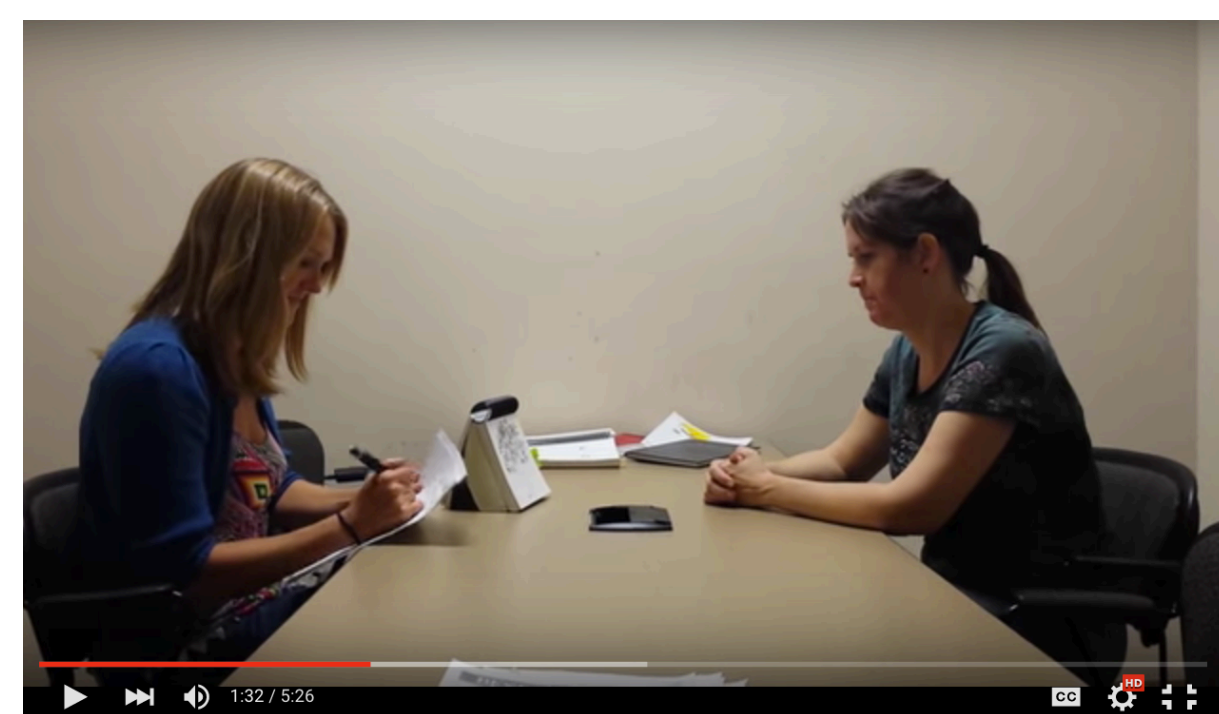- No Administration Demonstrations Available

Figure 1. Percentage of neuropsychological test information available on Google Images and YouTube

Conclusions

- A substantial amount of information regarding neuropsychological tests is available on Google Images and YouTube, significantly threatening the validity of these tests.

- It is recommended that professional neuropsychological associations begin to develop guidelines regarding appropriate content for websites and identify and continuously monitor websites that contain problematic information.

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