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Career Moves

BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY

Standardise IT compliance systems to ease burden, urge BCS delegates

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Stronger IT governance is needed across the industry, a BCS conference has been told. Although IT has never before had such an important role in business, there is less control over it now than there once was, attendees said.

IT governance frameworks, such as Cobit, ITIL and Coso, have an important role in the IT landscape as a result of legislation such as the US Sarbanes-Oxley Act and the Patriot Act, which can land firms with heavy penalties for non-compliance. European regulations with implications for IT include Basel 2 and the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive.

It is because of regulations such as these that governance and compliance have become a large indus-

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Governance and compliance have become large industries
- ▶ Effective data governance can improve management of information
- ▶ Compliance packages cannot keep pace with changing laws
- ▶ Compliance experts in demand despite lack of formal qualifications

tries, employing many thousands of people, the conference heard.

As well as facilitating adherence to Financial Services Authority initiatives, compliance can improve the integrity and management of a firm's data, attendees said.

IT compliance in the financial services sector promotes shareholder and customer value, and helps avoid financial scandals such as those that occurred at Enron and WorldCom. But too much governance bureaucracy can become a costly tick-box exercise.

The average bank needs between £15m and £25m to implement a typi-

cal IT-compliance programme, the conference heard. This prohibitive expense means that some smaller financial firms may shun IT governance best practice.

This lack of commitment to governance, and in turn to compliance, can result in disparate IT systems being used as a cost-cutting measure, attendees said.

Packaged compliance systems are now a common sight in the IT industry. However, the ever-changing nature of compliance means that

there is still a demand for experts, even though compliance education has not yet been formalised.

Research suggests that no single technology or supplier can provide an IT system that solves all the problems that compliance presents. As a result of this, a multitude of systems and technologies are needed to achieve this goal, attendees said.

They suggested that a move towards standardised IT compliance systems would reduce the need for specialists across the industry and would result in more efficient governance practices. Compliance should be seen as an outcome and a value driver, not as a function in its own right, attendees said.

Risk management: an IT director's guide
→ www.computerweekly.com/226615

Information about BCS membership: www.bcs.org/membership

BCS DIARY
SEPTEMBER

18 Birmingham Branch
Warning, advice and reporting points (Warps) – a community approach to information security. 6pm, Tally Ho Sports Centre, Birmingham.
http://birmingham.bcs.org/warps.htm

20 Computer Conservation Society
Titan: the poor man's Atlas. 2.30pm, Science Museum, London.
www.computerconservationsociety.org/20070920.htm

20 Northampton Branch
Management systems in local government. 7am, Wellingborough.
http://northampton.bcs.org

25 Aberdeen Branch
Protecting control systems from cyber-threats. 6.30pm, RGU, St Andrew Street, Aberdeen.
http://aberdeen.bcs.org/Cyber.pdf

27 Health Informatic Specialist Group
Speaker to be confirmed. 6pm, BCS, 5 Southampton Street, London.
www.hilsesg.bcs.org/fevents.htm

26 Swindon Branch
What can your local Young Professionals Group do for you? 6.30pm, New College, Swindon. www.swindonbcs.co.uk

Full BCS diary: www.bcs.org/diary

27 ICC SG and AICS
Small business marketing. 6.45pm, National Liberal Club, I Whitehall Place, London. www.aics.org.uk

28 Primary Health Care Specialist Group
Global health records. Eynsham Hall, Oxfordshire. www.phcsg.org.uk

Solution to the Puzzler on page 66

It seems certain that the seven-digit product starts with 3, so the two factors at the top will both start with I. Another important clue is the 8 in the fourth line, which must arise (with a "carry") from the multiplication 3 x 9 or 9 x 3. Furthermore, the 6 can only be generated by 3 + 3, 5 + I or I + 5. Further analysis brings forth:

$$
\begin{array}{r}
I\,9\,3\,7 \\
I\,9\,3\,7 \\
\hline
I\,3\,5\,5\,9 \\
5\,8\,I\,I \\
I\,7\,4\,3\,3 \\
I\,9\,3\,7 \\
\hline
3\,7\,5\,I\,9\,6\,9
\end{array}
$$

Post all Puzzler enquiries to
→ Jim Howson, 5 Hilltop Gardens, Dartford, Kent DAI 5JF

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