SYMPOSIUM SUMMARY

Cultivating And Securing The Information Supply Chain

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The event commenced Thursday evening with Keynote Speaker Robert Worrall, CIO for Sun Microsystems. Worrall discussed how thin client technology and the Java card have enabled business to create a data-centric world with a mobile workforce. The creative possibilities in this environment are boundless, but freedom from the office comes with increased risk. The CIO is in charge of creating and securing that new workspace, and organizations have no choice but to deal with this new reality. Maybe a new title is in order, too: chief of the information supply chain.

Friday morning began with Steve Cooper, CIO of the American Red Cross. According to Cooper, Hurricane Katrina delivered an excruciating lesson on “information integration in action, not theory.” The nation’s largest natural disaster highlighted the value of information and the crucial role played in any organization – government, non-profit or private sector – of the information supply chain, he noted. Cooper warned that “not having the right information at the right time leads to bad decisions.”

Plenary speaker Chris Cummiskey, chief information officer for the State of Arizona, directs computer operations for 114 agencies ranging from the Acupuncture Board of Examiners to the Weights and Measures Department. In his presentation, Cummiskey described the partnerships and collaboration that make it work. Cummiskey stressed the importance of streamlined IT systems, stating the problem is that several such security crisis plans exist, but no single plan fits the government’s far-flung needs. “There are a lot of plans out there, with a lot of good intentions, but where is the continuity? They don’t fit very well together,” he noted. “We also need pretty good functionality, because we are heading for increasing convergence of the network.”

In addition to highlighted speakers, a series of panel sessions were offered to attendees featuring leading academics and practitioners.
Ed Kamins, senior vice president and chief operational excellence officer for Avnet, Inc. moderated the panel “Growing the IT Supply Chain.” According to Kamins, the information supply chain is more reminiscent of a web. Enmeshed in this web are four key players: the manufacturer, the distributor, the value-added reseller and the end user. Likening the development of an efficient information supply chain organization to that of a fast-growing city, an information supply chain needs to develop infrastructure to grow the supply chain and also to make sure that we don’t inhibit the speed of flows that goes through it – involve the back-and-forth exchange of products, money and information.

“Securing the Health Information Exchange” was a panel moderated by Harvey Shrednick. Panelists discussed how protecting the privacy and security of health information has become a major focus area as both the federal and state government are mandating more electronic data exchange. As the use of electronic health records becomes pervasive across many health organizations, patient information becomes vulnerable to misuse and identity theft. This panel reviewed the current issues and potential solutions being considered both in the private and public sectors.

Emerging Technologies” was moderated by Raghu T. Santanam. Major unanticipated events have occurred over the past few years that have challenged organization’s capabilities to maintain operations in spite of damaged or non-existent infrastructure. This panel examined business continuity issues facing companies and their use of emerging technologies to provide solutions. A major focus was on the decision making process of technology utilization in a proactive versus reactive mode.

“Risk Management in the Information Supply Chain” was moderated by Uday Kulkarni. Few companies operate independently in the Electronic Age, which means that the security vulnerability of every business partner – outsourcer, client, whatever – whose computer system has access to yours is a potential portal to your most sensitive data. A series of presentations emphasized areas of risk and initiated discussions on ways to protect yourself and your organization.
Benjamin Shao moderated “Modeling Information Supply Chains”. The academic panel consisted of three presentations on the modeling of information supply chains, followed by subsequent discussions on the relevant issues encountered in such activities. The topics covered include emergence management, intermediary search, and secure semantic e-business processes.

Associated with the Symposium, CABIT and Sun Microsystems co-sponsored a CIO breakfast that preceded the Friday morning portion of the event. The breakfast was attended by a select group of Information Technology leaders. ASU President Michael Crow welcomed the guest and briefly reviewed recent progress at the University. The breakfast discussion was then moderated by renowned futurist Thornton May, with the focus on operational excellence in the information supply chain. To initiate the dialogue, a working definition of Information Supply Chain was provided to the participants: a collection of information and communication technologies to provide a secure integrated decisional environment that enables business partners to collectively sense and respond to opportunities and challenges in a networked ecosystem. The participants shared their views based on individual experiences with the subject matter and concluded that this topic required more time to fully cover this important area.

As the Symposium is reviewed, everyone at CABIT realizes the success of the event would not have been possible without the collective efforts of the presenters and attendees. Many thanks to everyone who participated! Our deep appreciation is also extended to the sponsors who made this event possible.

Full articles on the Symposium can be located in a special issue published by Knowledge@WPCarey. To subscribe, please go to: knowledge.wpcarey.asu.edu. Presentations and video streams from CABIT Symposium 2006 as well as current information on the next CABIT Symposium can be obtained on the CABIT website: wpcarey.asu.edu/seid/cabit

Symposium Chair, Ajay Vinze – CABIT Director
Organizing Committee, Research – Raghu Santanam
Speaker / Sponsor Relations – Harvey Shrednick
Event Coordination and Logistics – Katy Gilbert and Kimberly Linton

We look forward to seeing you at our next symposium. Current information on CABIT events can be found at: wpcarey.asu.edu/seid/cabit