

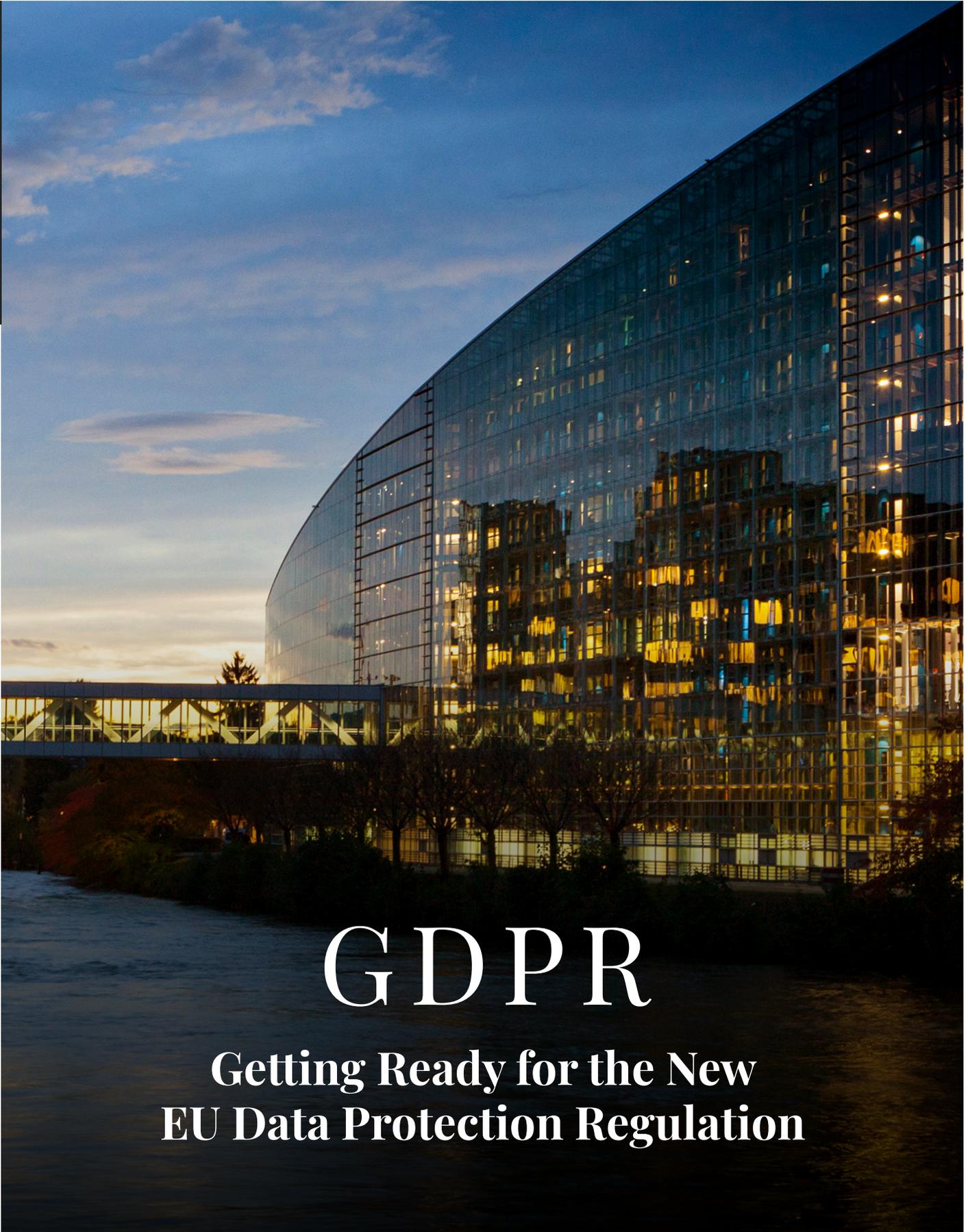
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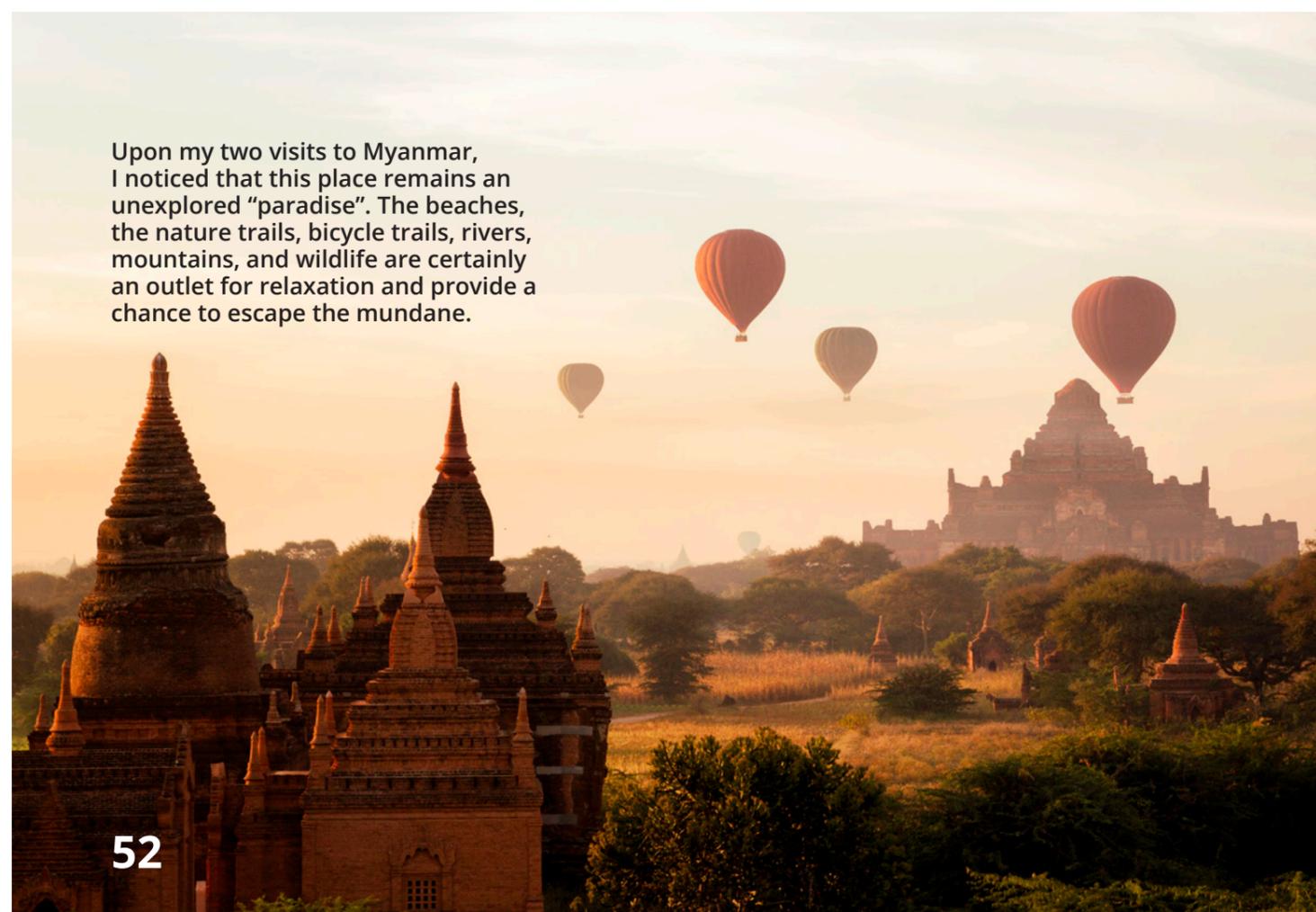
When Standards Matter

GDPR

**Getting Ready for the New
EU Data Protection Regulation**



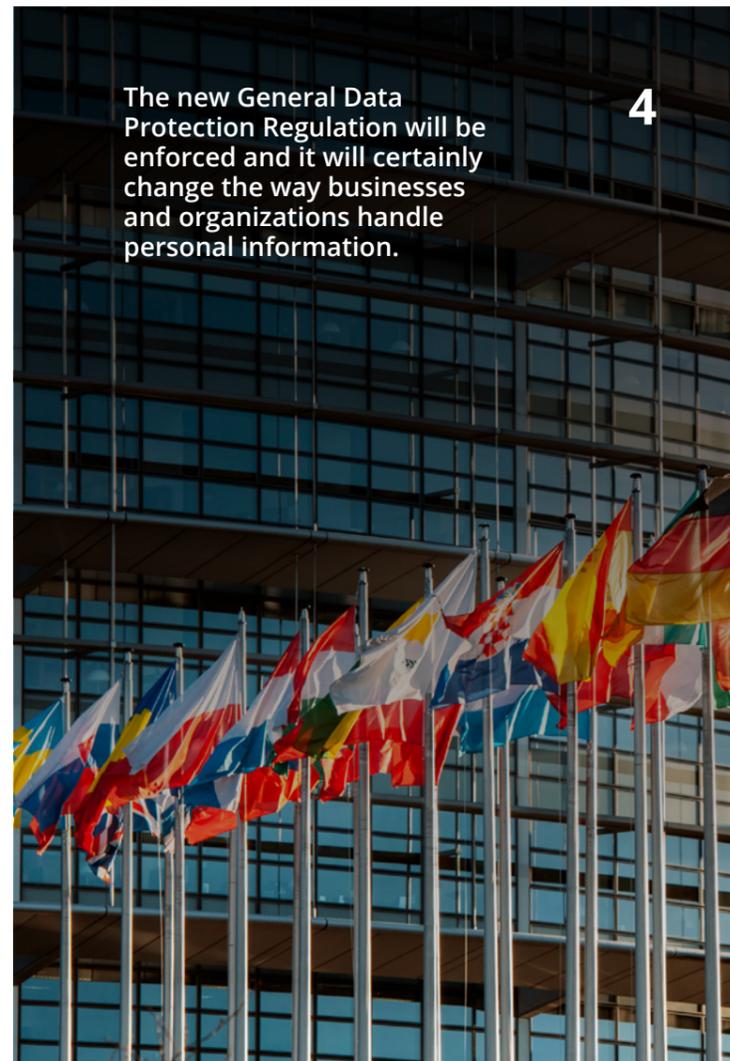
Upon my two visits to Myanmar, I noticed that this place remains an unexplored "paradise". The beaches, the nature trails, bicycle trails, rivers, mountains, and wildlife are certainly an outlet for relaxation and provide a chance to escape the mundane.



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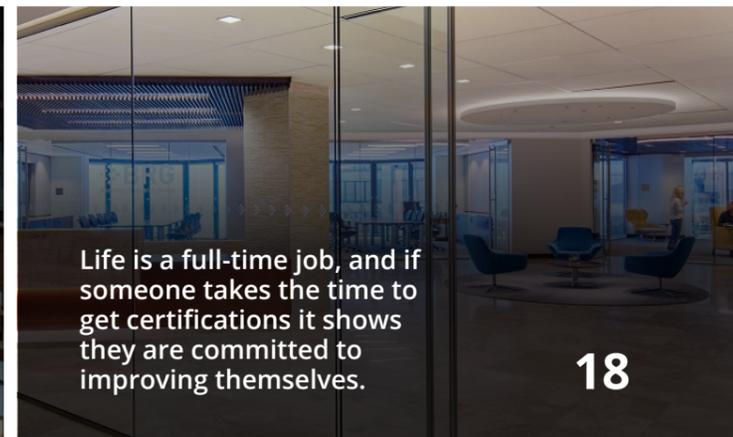
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GDPR: Getting Ready for the New EU Data Protection Regulation

May 2018 will witness the most significant reform of Europe's data protection laws over two decades. The new General Data Protection Regulation will be enforced and it will certainly change the way businesses and organizations handle personal information. Due to the rapid pace of technological changes, digital information is being created, used, stored and distributed

on a very large scale. The old structure of data handling, therefore, is no longer adequate to meet the challenges arising from globalization and technological advancements. The new General Data Protection Regulation is fit for the digital age, and is a precondition for realizing the benefits of economic activity that is not bound by national borders.

Given that today's economic activities often require the transfer of data from one location to the other, within the EU territory or in non-EU countries, it has become particularly challenging for enforcement bodies to apply the regulations coherently. In light of these developments, and due to the increased amount of data processing currently taking place, the new EU General Data Protection Regulation and its rules and principles are well suited to deal with the technological realities of today. As long as such principles and rules are applied consistently, GDPR will set a new standard for personal information.

What is GDPR?

It took four years of discussion and negotiation for GDPR to be finally approved and processed by the European Parliament and the European Council at the end of April 2016. Ever since, businesses and citizens are grappling with the challenging task of developing the legal regime which will be followed once the GDPR is enforced in May 2018. To ensure the protection of personal data and privacy of EU citizens in this fast paced information society, companies will need to follow the provisions of this regulation. Organizations will have to also adapt to GDPR data transfer rules when transferring personal data outside the EU.

Provided that in the eyes of many, the shortcomings of the existing data protection laws are found in the lack of consistent and diligent enforcement of rules, rather than the insufficient legal protection, GDPR has been designed to create consistency and harmonization across EU Member States in terms of data protection.

Nevertheless, in addition to the opportunities and benefits it generates, GDPR also increases the organization's obligations and investments made to be GDPR compliant.

The Emergence of GDPR

Members of the EU operate under the current Data Protection Regulation (1995) which has its own national laws. In the UK for instance, you have the Data Protection Act (1995), which regulates the usage of your personal information by the government, companies and other institutions. The original directive of 1995 was formulated in a time period where only 1% of people used internet and there was no social media. The majority of people today uses social media and constantly produces and consumes information electronically.

The GDPR has emerged because of two main reasons. Primarily, the EU wants to provide people with more control over their personal information and how that information is used, considering the cases of Facebook and Google which have access to the personal information of their users. The current legislation was enforced in what now appears to be a different technological era.

The second reason for GDPR emergence is that the EU wants to provide a simpler regulation which eases the legal operational environment for businesses by having the same data protection law throughout the EU market. The EU estimates that the new regulation will save companies up to € 2.3 billion per year.



The basic objective of the GDPR is the stronger enforcement of data protection among organizations. Being able to build comprehensive reports about the usage of personal data is not simply a GDPR requirement, it is also a means through which data security and privacy risks are reduced. This will contribute in creating deeper bonds with the customers and at the same time, it will strengthen the organizations' position. GDPR will make a difference in the way organizations communicate with customers in terms of their personal data processing.

General Data Protection Regulation Requirements

In order to be compliant with GDPR, Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) provided twelve steps that serve as a guide to successfully fulfil the regulation requirements:

1. **Understand the Regulation:** The first important step is to understand your obligations related to the processing and storing of data.
2. **Identification of personal data:** Every organization (subject to GDPR) should identify and record all the personal data that currently holds and plans to obtain in the future, including the source of the data and the individual(s) granted access to such data.
3. **Communication of privacy information:** Organizations should review the existing privacy notices and set up a plan to make the necessary changes required by GDPR.
4. **Individual's rights:** Check all the procedures that cover individual's rights, including the procedures for the deletion of personal data and provision of electronic data, and evaluate whether a standardized format is being used.



5. **Subject access requests:** Procedures should be reviewed and updated, and a plan on how requests will be handled (without delays) should be set up.
6. **Legal basis:** Based on the different types of data processing you perform, the organization should identify the legal basis for holding data and documenting it.
7. **Consent:** Obtaining consent involves an affirmative indication of agreement. The consent should be reviewed, and evaluated how it is sought, obtained, recorded and whether any changes are applicable.
8. **Children's Data:** If your organization processes data of underage subjects, you should consider setting up systems for verifying the age of the individuals and gathering consent from parents or legal guardians, if necessary.
9. **Data Breaches:** Organizations should develop the proper procedures and policies which enable them to detect, report, and investigate a potential personal data breach.
10. **Data Protection Officers:** Some organizations are required to appoint a Data Protection Officer (DPO) to evaluate whether the organization is compliant with GDPR requirements. The organization can choose to assign someone within the organization, or outsource the role to someone who can fulfill the DPO requirements. It can be someone in your organization or an external data protection advisor.
11. **Data Protection by Design and Data Protection Impact Assessments:** A DPIA will enable the organizations to identify and mitigate potential privacy issues, whereas the DPD promotes data protection and privacy throughout the projects' lifecycle.
12. **International:** Organizations working in more than one EU country and that perform cross-border processing, should define their lead data protection supervisory authority.

Penalties of Non-compliance with GDPR:

In case of non-compliance, the fines that can be imposed to organizations depend on several factors such as:

- › Whether the breach was intentional or due to negligence
- › Whether the controller or processor took any actions to mitigate the damage
- › The nature and duration of the breach
- › The means through which the regulator became aware about the breach
- › Technical and organizational measures that had been applied by the controller or processor
- › The categories of personal data that were affected
- › Lack of cooperation with competent authorities

In case organizations fail to comply with the GDPR requirements, the penalties can reach up to € 10 million or 2% of an organization's annual turnover, whichever is greater. Also, in case of more serious infringements, the penalties can amount to € 20 million or 4% of an organization's annual revenue, whichever is greater.

How will GDPR Impact Your Business Operations?

The Impact of GDPR on customer engagement: Under the GDPR, the rules pertaining to consent obtainment are highly rigorous. Individuals have the right to withdraw consent at any time, and organizations have to prove that the individual agreed to a certain action, such as receiving a newsletter.

This will directly influence the way sales and marketing activities are managed and conducted. Organizations have to review all the existing forms, applications and their processes to be compliant with email marketing practices and opt-in rules. For example, individuals have to fill out forms or provide their consent by ticking a box that confirms their willingness to receive marketing materials. Individuals should also have the option of opting out of direct marketing.

In addition, under the GDPR, potential customers in B2B markets cannot exchange business cards at trade show fairs, and save the information received in the mailing lists.

Preparing to Comply with GDPR

The EU General Data Protection and Regulation (GDPR) will be enacted on May 25, 2018 and it will create extra security and privacy obligations which EU member states will need to comply with. Company executives, therefore, should properly prepare for the new regulation, prior to its enforcement. The preparation phase is critical as it includes training employees and adapting new technologies and processes to facilitate compliance. It may be quite challenging for companies to deploy and implement new security and compliance processes of GDPR on their own, particularly those who face shortages of IT personnel and skills. Hence, companies should contact organizations that provide security strategies and solutions to protect personal information and business processes as to ease their compliance burden.

GDPR: An Opportunity for Information Security and Data Professionals

The upcoming regulation will open the doors to new career opportunities for Information Security and data professionals, by enabling them to engage in activities that protect the organization's reputation and prevent potential financial penalties.

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Provided that the GDPR will change the way organizations process and store data, organizations will face the unavoidable need to hire new professionals to take the reins.

Even though the role in each organization will vary based on the size and existing procedures and controls, the GDPR professionals will be responsible for defining and building comprehensive solutions for data protection. Also, they should be able to support the organization in determining and implementing the most suitable technologies to achieve compliance with the new EU Regulation. GDPR professionals will assist in prioritizing data information, advancing data quality, and building greater customer trust.

PECB



Learn more about the General Data Protection Regulation through PECB's training courses and acquire knowledge on all the necessary tools and techniques that will enable you to assist your organization in achieving and maintaining its compliance with GDPR requirements.

→ [Find Out More](#)

Effectively Aligning Information Security with the Business Objectives

Every organization defines certain specific objectives it must meet. And every organization relies on information and information assets to achieve the said objectives. The alignment of information security with business objectives facilitates meeting business goals and ensures return on investment through mitigation of corporate risks. However, effectively aligning information security to the business is still a challenge to many organizations. There is no single approach to achieve this, but various correlated actions can be employed to move the organization closer to meeting the alignment objective. The first thing any organization should do is change the misconception that information security is an IT function, and embrace the fact that information runs the business, and thus information security must be a corporate-wide issue, while technology is an enabler. Organisations should also realize that information security should be tailored to each organization's story, and must be both proactive, in order to encourage a robust information security profile, and reactive, in order to foster business continuity and resilience.



About the author

Aprielle Oichoe
Managing Director,
InfoSphere Ltd



Aprielle is a highly competent and dexterous Cyber Security and Risk professional. She has handled different Information Security and Risk roles and projects; thus, garnering vast experience in various areas of Information Technology, Information Security and Enterprise Risk Management. Aprielle's quintessential objective is to influence minds, shape cybersecurity perceptions and continually be part of the instrumentality through which some of the global cybersecurity risks are mitigated and organizational cyber security cultural transformation is achieved.

The following key actions can be employed to align Information Security to the business:

1. Ingrain information security into all business elements, activities and processes from strategic levels to operational level through a "security by design" approach. The executive level management should drive the information security agenda from the boardroom.

The business model canvas is a good place to start since it gives a clear picture of your organisation's offerings (products or services), infrastructure in terms of key activities, resources and networks, customer segments, channels and relationships, and finances (revenue streams and costing structures). All these elements have information associated with them. A good question to ask is what role does information play in helping us achieve our business objectives?

In order to incorporate Information Security into this model an organization should:

- Identify all information associated with each part of the business model elements (e.g. information associated with product development could be a product model, source code, product designs etc.) and segment, and classify the resultant information in terms of its sensitivity and criticality to the organization.
- Identify all relevant stakeholders, their information security requirements, and involve them in information security initiatives.
- Identify any laws and regulations associated with the various information segments. For instance, if you generate and handle payment card data, you may be obliged to conform to the PCI DSS standard requirements.
- Identify the processes that the information is associated with, as well as the process dependencies. For example, in terms of procurement and contracting, what information is required for the acquisition of products and services?
- Define the associated resources such as technology assets relied upon to generate, store, and transmit information.
- Ensure that the information security budget is incorporated into the organization's budget.
- Define the people (both internal and external) that play a role in the various elements and interact with the associated information.
- Identify the business objectives associated with each segment of the business model, and how information contributes in meeting these objectives.
- Define information security measurement and performance metrics that are reflective of the organization's business objectives.



2. Align information security to the Enterprise Risk Management Framework. Identify the organization's risk appetite and thresholds, and formulate an information risk management process that is aligned with the corporate-wide Risk Management framework. Identify, assess, evaluate and periodically review the risks of corporate information throughout its life cycle, and the consequent impacts on the business.

Key questions to ask in order to identify information risks through the information lifecycle include:

- › **Creation:** How is information created? Is it internally created or externally acquired from suppliers and customers? Who is authorized to create what type of information and how do we ensure that only authorized persons can create or modify this information? What technology do we require to facilitate this?
- › **Transmission:** Who is authorized to access what information? How is it used and what mechanisms are used for transmission? How do we ensure that only authorized persons can access this information?
- › **Storage:** How and where are various classes of information stored? How do we ensure that we have information to keep the company going in the event of an incident and how much information can we afford to lose without throwing the organization into a crisis in terms of meeting corporate objectives?
- › **Archival:** Are there any regulations and requirements on how the organization should archive various kinds of information?

- › **Destruction:** Are there any regulations and requirements on how to destroy corporate and third party information? How do we ensure that we abide by these requirements?

Information Security spending is focused on ensuring Return on Security Investment (ROSI). Investing in security acts as a form of insurance as it is intended to mitigate corporate risk and reduce the impact of the risk on the organization in the event of an incident. Thus, the selection of mitigation controls should be commensurate with the identified information risks and the potential impact to the organization. Selection of controls should also take into consideration the human aspects of information security such as employee perceptions of risk. This will help the organization understand which controls to employ and how to implement them in order to positively evolve the organization's information security culture.

3. Benchmark against international Information Security standards such as ISO/IEC 27000 series and NIST, where relevant. Though these are usually generic, they are a great indicator of how your information security profile should look and give guidance on how to achieve a strong information security posture.
4. Implement Information Security in an integrated and cohesive fashion, and as such ensure that the whole organization is on the same plane. This helps foster a corporate-wide information security culture. A steering committee can be used to champion information security programs and facilitate uniformity.
5. Formulate clear Information Security policies and measurable strategic, tactical and operational level objectives that are suited to your organization's requirements, and ensure

that the policies are enforced across the organization. Information security policies should also be periodically reviewed for suitability and updated to fit organizational changes. Also cultivate a culture of periodically measuring your information security performance, the GAPS between your “as-is” position and “to-be” position, as this will help you determine whether you are meeting your objectives. Consequently, ensure that the identified GAPS and nonconformities are adequately dealt with through a nonconformity closure program that employs a rigorous root-cause analysis to detect the actual issues causing deviation from the desired requirements.

6. Ensure there are clear communication and feedback channels for Information Security requirements, policies, initiatives, roles and responsibilities, objectives, metrics and security incidents, events and changes across all organizational levels. A communication plan is a great way to ensure that all relevant information security information is communicated as it defines intervals, communication channels, communication mechanisms etc. The effective communication is the key in dealing with and containing information security incidents.
7. Ensure that the required competencies for Information Security are taken into consideration during the hiring and training processes to enable the corporate to meet its objectives.
8. Contact with special interest groups to ensure that the organization is always kept up to date on relevant information security matters that directly affect the organization’s operations.
9. Always keep in mind that “you do not prepare for the test on the day of the test”. Ensure that there is proactive preparation to facilitate effective handling of both predictable and unpredictable incidents through properly implemented and tested business continuity, emergency and disaster handling programs. The information required for these processes should always be accurate and available as this will significantly lower your downtimes during an incident and facilitate quicker restoration of business operations.



In April 2017, a technical corrigendum to ISO/IEC 27001:2013 documentation created confusion and concern among organizations certified against this standard. However, the corrigendum was not officially made by ISO, but only some countries that are part of the European Standardization Organization. Hence, it is important to note that since the technical corrigendum did not add new requirements to the official ISO/IEC 27001:2013 standard, and that most certification bodies are accredited with the current version of the standard (ISO/IEC 27001:2013), the current status of the certified ISMS will not be impacted.



Special Encounter with Berkeley Research Group

The Spotlight



Douglas Small's Perspective

Douglas Small, Director at Berkeley Research Group joins us at our special tour of questions to provide insights about the BRG. Small is part of BRG's Global Investigation & Strategic Intelligence practice and is responsible for assisting clients with all aspects of internal corporate fraud issues, bribery and corruption matters, and aspects involving regulators such as the U.S. Department of Justice and Securities and Exchange Commission. He also helps clients in areas of compliance, auditing and monitoring of corporate compliance management systems, more specifically Anti-Bribery Management Systems surrounding ISO 37001.

For 14 years, Small was a special agent in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, where he conducted numerous complex white collar criminal investigations, including corporate, healthcare and financial institution fraud,

money laundering, wire fraud, mail fraud, and public corruption. His experience taught him a lot on what he does today but, as he says, sometimes we must accept things as they are. Though nothing can be done to stop people from being humans, Small's past experiences allowed him to help companies and top management to address such behavior through the "Code of conduct and compliance and most importantly through a tone that emphasizes that unethical behavior will not be tolerated by anyone."

Facing such responsibilities requires doing more than what is written on a job description and it takes a lot of inner motivation to succeed in such tasks. When explaining what mostly matters in his job, Small states that it is crucial to provide clients with sound advice based on facts and circumstances of the particular issue they are facing.

In today's competitive world, it is very difficult for businesses to survive, and even more difficult to stand out in the market. For this reason, many companies are devoting their time and investing their budgets on the ISO standards. Many companies prefer to do business with ISO certified organizations, or hire based on the certifications of the employees. One must have qualified and experienced people in order to get the green light.

Named by Forbes as one of America's Best Management Consulting Firms in 2017, Berkeley Research Group is a leading global strategic advisory and expert consulting firm that provides independent advice, data analytics, valuation, authoritative studies, expert testimony, investigations, transaction advisory, restructuring services, and regulatory and dispute consulting to Fortune 500 corporations, financial institutions, government agencies, major law firms, and regulatory bodies around the world.



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“Investigations and compliance are not a one size fits all solution. Every matter that I work on has particular issues that differ from client to client; two clients may have a corruption issue, but the investigation plan for each is going to vary.”

Why Hire Certified Individuals?

Certification is one of the driving forces for many professional companies when hiring human resources. The expectations of increasing the earning potential move careers to the next level or simply having a competitive advantage in the market are believed to be crucial decisive factors for many professional companies when hiring new employees.

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“Life is a full time job, and if someone takes the time to get certifications it shows they are committed to improving themselves. It also shows they have a grasp of particular concepts and subject matter expertise in their chosen profession.”

BRG does a great job in growing the knowledge base of its consultants both with on-the-job learning and training needed to excel in this profession. “In the consulting world in general, as you gain more experience and look to move up in an organization, certifications allow you to become more focused and become a subject matter expert. BRG is no different.” explains Small.



Organizations Facing Corruption and Bribery

A significant number of our business processes are driven from the work environment regulations. Small had been in the consulting world for about 10 years now, and he perceives the increase in bribery and corruption enforcement worldwide as very compelling. As he says, “The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act here in the United States has been around since 1977, but new anti-bribery and anti-corruption legislation is becoming the norm. Brazil, China and other countries, formally known as places where bribery is the cost of doing business, have stepped up their enforcement actions in this area.”

“With all the challenges organizations face, it is important to stay in front of the issues”, says Small. By now, most companies have addressed the anti-corruption regulatory environment by implementing robust compliance plans, installing telephone lines to report alleged unethical behavior and training individuals to adapt to the

new ways of doing business. Despite all these measures, unethical and fraudulent behavior conducted by people within the organizations remains a concerning issue.

Organizations need to remain diligent in their efforts to fight internal corruption. “It is not possible to completely eliminate the risk of corruption, but by continually reviewing and monitoring the compliance system and sending a message that unethical behavior will not be tolerated, organizations can overcome many of these challenges.”

When giving advice to someone taking on a similar position, Small states “For me it’s all about understanding why something happened, looking behind the transaction or issue at hand and figuring out what really took place. I spent a short time in my career in public accounting and heard many times “tick and tie, don’t ask why”, but in my current line of work now, it’s really all about the why, who, what and when. For example, you may come across a payment or transaction to a consultant; on the surface, the invoice looks

legitimate; it has the approval stamp from accounting and bears all the markings of a valid transaction. But as you look more closely, you may find other information that peaks your interest. For example, why the transaction was conducted under the wrong accounting code? Why is the amount just under the company threshold for two signatures; why was it paid in three days when the company’s average is 45 days, why did the CEO request the payment directly? It is all about peeling back the layers and getting the true purpose of the payment.”

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions, position, or policy of Berkeley Research Group, LLC or its other employees and affiliates.

Emotional Intelligence

MAKE SENSE OUT OF SENSELESSNESS



Emotions, as a state of feeling, are those that shape one's destiny, help one understand and empathize, and are those that one obeys to without realizing it. While some continue to view emotions as "acute disturbances of the individual," there is a general shift of beliefs from emotions being considered as what make people "lose control" to emotions being considered as assisting cognition.

Peter Salovey and John Mayer introduced the term of emotional intelligence as "the ability to understand your own and others emotions."

Intelligence has always been connected with intellect and cognition only. However, emotional intelligence as a concept was introduced to explain how people with impressive IQs fail, while those that were school dropouts become very successful in their fields.

When taking a major decision such as hiring someone, managing a team, or dismissing an employee, various feelings can be experienced, either in the form of a flushed face, knot in your stomach, or a general feeling of unease. It is almost impossible to prevent ourselves from feeling. By gaining the ability to connect or disconnect from any emotion at any given situation, however, one can control emotions and prevent them from affecting the decisions taken, communication with others, or attitude towards others. An emotionally intelligent person is characterized by emotional self-awareness, self-control, empathy, and leadership. The proponents of EI emphasize the idea that the understanding and managing of emotions, is the key to an improved quality of life.

Balance is the key they say!

Whether emotional intelligence matters the "most" is contentious, but one can certainly claim that EI is essential for one's performance and success. What makes it special is the fact that it represents the balance between the rational and emotional brain. This means that emotionally intelligent people are aware of their emotions, and have control over them on the moment they are feeling them.

Indeed, IQ is very important and we must never underestimate it. Nevertheless, individuals seeking to be leaders in today's world have got to understand that EI is just as important and vital to their success. As leadership is widely viewed as an emotion-laden process, the evacuation, framing and mobilization of emotions determine the leader's ability to succeed. The incorporation of emotional intelligence into leadership development programs facilitates the effective management of people or of processes that are led by people, and how they function by simply finding a suitable approach to them. Nevertheless, that does not mean that you should be nice and kind to everyone. Sometimes it might mean the opposite.

Let's Go Back

In the 60s, Peter Salavoy and John Mayer were the ones that initially coined the Emotional Intelligence concept, but it was Daniel Goleman who gave a substantial contribution in spreading it as a term, and helping others understand its importance. After publishing his book "Emotional Intelligence" Goleman said "I remember having the thought, just before this book was published ten years ago, that if one day I overheard a conversation in which two strangers used the phrase emotional intelligence and both understood what it meant, I would have succeeded in spreading the concept more widely into the culture. Little did I know".

Nowadays, the EI concept has reached nearly every corner of the world. Schools are offering SEL (social and emotional learning) courses and companies currently hire and promote their employees based on EI. The Harvard Business Review has praised emotional intelligence as "a ground-breaking, paradigm-shattering idea."

According to Goleman's theory, there are 5 key elements to every individual who is emotionally intelligent:

Self-awareness - being aware of your emotions

Self-regulation - have control of your emotions

Motivation - self motivation

Empathy - the ability to put yourself into the other person's position

Social skills - great communicators

Job Skill - Using Emotions Intelligently

Scenario:

A company wants to hire a new Creative Concept Manager to create original content and campaigns for our products and services. The job vacancy is announced, the best candidates are shortlisted based on their CVs, and then interviewed. During the interviews, an emotionally intelligent interviewer does not just hear the candidates' answers, but also carefully looks at the way the candidates move their hands, the tone of their voice and their reflexes. By doing so, one is able to see beyond the candidate's emotional condition experienced usually during interviews.

There may be an individual who failed to meet the set criteria, or does not have the necessary experience, but the passion expressed distinctly during the interview, makes him/her stand out from other very qualified candidates.

After a week, the top management is still not determined on which candidate to choose, and it designs a test to measure the creativity of the potential employee. Afterwards, scores are compared and the individual that scored best is different from the one that seemed highly passionate about the job during the interview.

An emotionally intelligent manager would choose the passionate candidate in this case, as an EI person knows that this is a quality that experience or sharpness cannot outweigh. At the end of the day, things don't always make sense to all, but that does not make them senseless, and emotional intelligence is what helps us make sense out of senselessness.

Use emotions to your advantage

Self-awareness is the key cornerstone to emotional intelligence, and based on a study conducted by the Cornell University, a high self-awareness score was found to be the strongest predictor of overall success. Self-awareness enhances the leader's ability to build bonds, find means for all members to bring their strengths to the table, and foster consensus on a solution.

The ability to effectively manage the human side of the business plays a critical role in the success of a company. All the individuals who seek to become great leaders depend on their people to achieve the desired success. As we might be very knowledgeable, but then again we don't know it all, leaders should actively listen to the team members and moderate their emotions so that such emotions can support daily activities and enhance the quality of life.

Transforming Lives and Careers with Online Education



Those who were once excluded from education due to geography, life circumstances, or socioeconomic life, now have the opportunity to earn a degree by participating in online education. Perhaps, in the past it was hardly imagined that there would be a time when institutions create online courses and programs to serve a population that is dispersed and less likely to attend full-time education.

According to Allen & Seaman study, distance education enrollments have grown at a rate of 7% between fall 2012 and fall 2014, respectively 403,420 additional distance students over a two year period in US (Online Report Card). However, even though there is an enormous and rapid growth of distance education and enrollments, there are small improvements in the perception of the relative quality of online education as compared to traditional education. Survey results show that 23% of academic leaders rate the learning outcomes of online education as inferior to those of face to face education.

Nevertheless, the growing presence of distance learning has changed the landscape of formal education. As online education providers are able, and can afford to offer qualitative niche programs for a broader group of people, the virtual environment for pursuing education is becoming increasingly attractive. Online learning certainly has become an imperative format for delivering knowledge, and whether it becomes the norm in education is a matter that only time will resolve.

How Did We Get Here?

The necessity to respond to the changing demographics of learners, and to remove the geographic barriers to instruction, has encouraged people to find means of earning degrees, improving performance and acquiring knowledge through online environments.

The access to information used to be an issue for all students and individuals interested to master their knowledge on a particular field, as they had to wait in library lines with an ID card worried if they could find the information they were looking for. But, with the invention of computers, this issue now belongs to the past. Computers and internet were inventions that changed our lives forever by making the access to information, books, publications, music, movies, and documentaries easier than ever.



Now that technology is being used for instructional purposes, a full-time mother, a constructor, a 70-year-old man, or a full-time employee can advance their education by engaging in virtual classrooms and obtaining degrees. Not a bad idea, right?

Getting Inside the Mind of an Online Student

Students are choosing online programs over traditional education as they prefer the flexibility they offer, the opportunity to organize the study time on their own, and the comfort of studying at their own place.

Considering that leading universities accept only a specific number of students, or the tuition fees and living costs are financially unreachable for many, the challenges of pursuing a degree in these universities are increasing over time. In 2014, the New York Times reported that Elite Colleges turn away up to 95% of the brightest students. This was shocking to many, as a majority of qualified students are left with no hope for a decent job, leading to depression or anxiety. Online universities, on the other hand, are giving these students a chance to overcome potential constraints that make education difficult or impossible to pursue.

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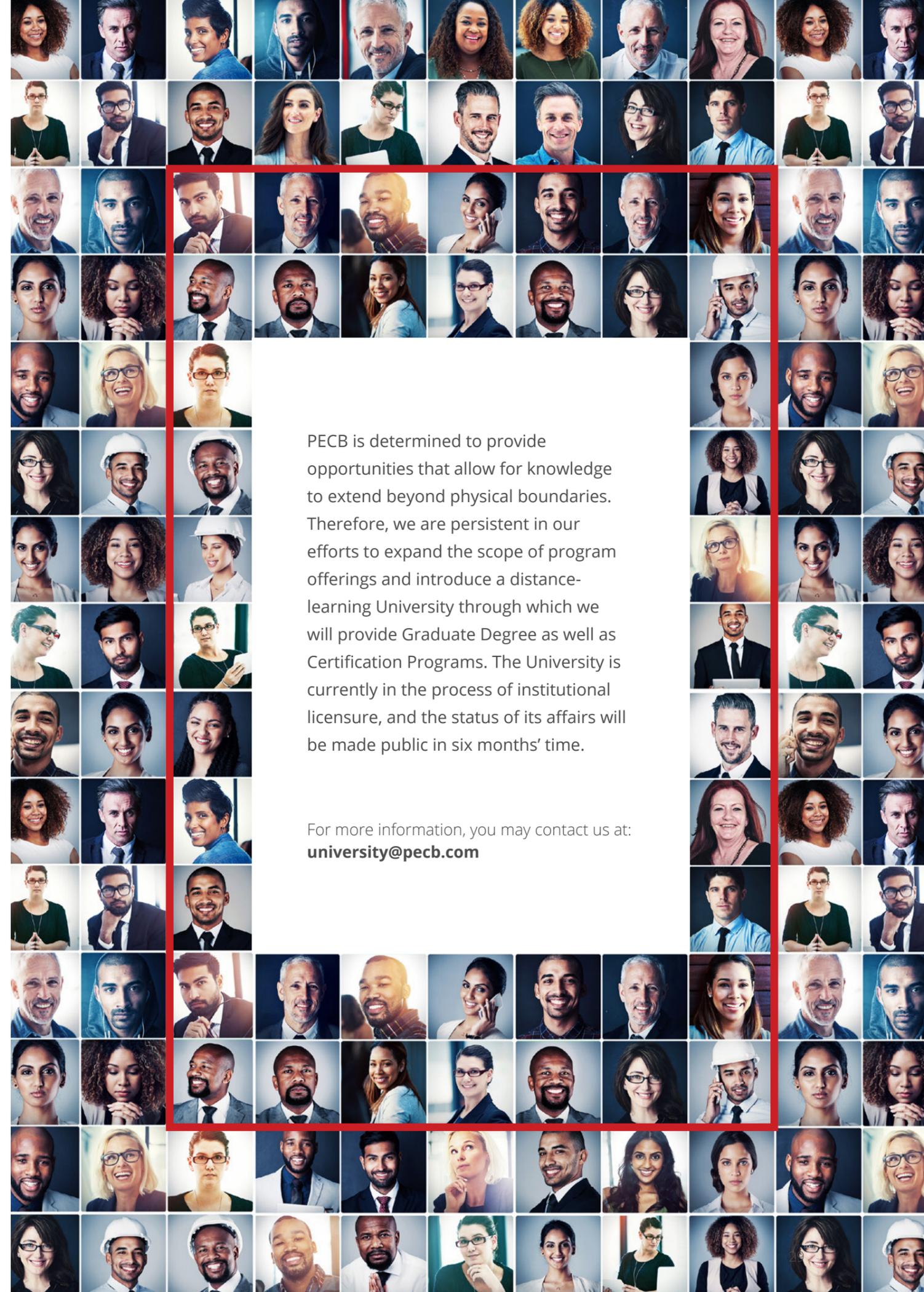
“What if a young boy, the next Bill Gates, from Liberia wanted to attend the Duke University in the USA, but due to life circumstances couldn't? The world can miss out on so many talented individuals from all over the world only because there are not enough chairs or professors to accept all those who apply.”

One of the key findings of a research on online college students conducted by a joint project of The Learning House, Inc. and Aslanian Market Research was that students were deliberately choosing online educations as their modality of choice. Half of online college students say they definitely would not, probably would not, or are not sure if they would have attended their current program if it was not offered online. Quality and satisfaction remain high; 90% of those surveyed who had also taken on-ground classes, feel their experience in an online classroom is better or the same as their experience on campus. Upon graduating, 72% of online students feel it was worth their time, and 69% feel it was worth the investment of their money.

As Nelson Mandela said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Online education has the potential to reduce educational inequality by providing access to learning opportunities, by not limiting students to choose from a few universities near their area, and by offering the chance to participate in virtual classrooms of students from Asia, Europe, Australia, America, Africa and other parts of the world to discuss various topics, thus contributing to the enrichment of students' experience and perception.

PECB is determined to provide opportunities that allow for knowledge to extend beyond physical boundaries. Therefore, we are persistent in our efforts to expand the scope of program offerings and introduce a distance-learning University through which we will provide Graduate Degree as well as Certification Programs. The University is currently in the process of institutional licensure, and the status of its affairs will be made public in six months' time.

For more information, you may contact us at:
university@pecb.com



Are **traditional classrooms** becoming **distant memories** for today's students?

6,150,000

Students took an online class in the past 12 months

277

Total number of accredited online universities

97%

Online universities that have a 25:1 or better student/faculty ratio



DIVERSITY



LOCAL IS GLOBAL



AFFORDABILITY



HIGH JOB PLACEMENT



Smart Cities and a Sustainable Future

Many developments in technology promise to be a paradigm shift or world changing so much so that it can be difficult to distinguish the hype from the reality. One of these latest “hot terms” is Smart Cities but what exactly is a Smart City and how can a Smart City deliver a sustainable future?

Firstly, it is worth saying that sustainability can mean many things but in general the aim is to ensure that going forward into the future people can lead a healthy, prosperous life without damaging the environment and compromising resources and opportunities for future generations. The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals give a good view into the wide spectrum of issues that sustainability can cover.

About the author



Graeme Parker is a Technology Professional and CEO of Pro Captum a company serving the international sustainable project development market, providing training, expertise and capacity building services covering the themes of Air Pollution and Air Quality Improvement, Climate Change Mitigation and Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Energy Efficiency.

Graeme Parker
Tech. Professional & CEO,
Pro Captum

The following numbers from the UN give some ideas of the challenges ahead:

- › 50% of today's world population lives in urban areas (3.5 Billion), and by 2030, 60% of the population is projected to be urban
- › 60% in 2030 will be much greater than 60% today
- › By 2050, 75% of the world's population will live in cities
- › 1 in 8 currently live in one of the world's 28 "Mega Cities"
- › By 2050 it is predicted that 64% of the developing world and 86% of the developed world will be "urbanized"
- › 95% of Urban Growth by 2050 is expected to take place in developing countries
- › Cities account for more than 70% of global CO2 emissions
- › 75% of urban settlements are at risk from climate change impacts

The challenges associated with these numbers include a greater demand for resources like water and energy, increased demand on services such as healthcare and education and an increasing pollution and impact on biodiversity. Equally increased demand on housing can lead to rises in crime and social problems. From an energy perspective, it is worth considering that cities take up 2% of Earth's land surface but account for 80% energy use and 75% carbon emissions (UN 2014).

The idea of a Smart City is of one that tackles these real problems head on in creative ways, not just by using technology but through new approaches, ideas and citizen engagement. It is quintessential to take a holistic approach when dealing with complex problems.

A definition that further captures the dynamics of a Smart City development is the one adopted by the New Urban Informatics, a specialist in Smart City development.

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“An urban ecosystem that uses information and data to anticipate problems and better utilize resources across multiple disciplines.”

And the applications of data and analytics across the domains of an urban setting led to the term “Smart Cities”



Rapid Urbanization:

By 2030, 70% of the world`s population will reside in an urban setting.

GOVERNANCE



- › Management & Operations
- › Sustainability & Environment
- › Urban Planning
- › Economic Development
- › Public Policy
- › Resilience
- › Public Safety & Emergency Management

HUMAN INFRASTRUCTURE



- › Education
- › Social Programs
- › Health & Wellbeing

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE



- › Traffic, Vehicles & Logistics
- › Roads, Bridges & Tunnels
- › Rail & Transit
- › Ports & Airports
- › Buildings, Developments & Real Estate
- › Water
- › Energy & Utilities, including Microgrids
- › Garbage & Recycling
- › Communications & Networks

Source: www.newurbaninformatics.com

The simplest way to grasp the concept of sustainability in the context of a city is to overview two examples:

Stockholm Carbon Reduction Strategy – Congestion Charging

Whilst the concept of congestion charging is politically controversial, Stockholm demonstrated how such an approach can actually lead to improvements in air quality and a drop in air borne pollutants. The aim of the project was designed to reduce congestion, emissions and improve health and well-being.

One of the major points about this plan was the fact that it was established via a political consensus. Ensuring citizen support and engagement for any smart city initiative is imperative for success. There are many cases where solutions implemented top down by government have been treated with suspicion or not even utilised due to a lack of awareness, and conformity.

The solution included the implementation of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology to track vehicles traveling in and out of the designated central zone. Policies were

adjusted to charge users based on vehicle type and exemptions for “green cars.” This also stimulated the market for electric and hybrid vehicles.

Since the implementation of the ANPR, Stockholm has experienced a 10-14% drop in the air-borne pollutants and an 8.5% reduction for (NOx).

London Heygate Estate Redevelopment (Elephant Park)

The Heygate Estate in London was a well-known residential area due for re-development. In this case, the major project to regenerate a housing estate had sustainability at its heart with clear sustainable construction principles. The project included ensuring that all construction was formed from energy efficient materials, and the solar energy was utilized for power generation with LED efficient lighting. It also incorporated the development of green spaces with 283 new trees and communal “grow gardens” to encourage community building and provide access to fresh local food markets.

The project was recognized by C40 cities as a climate positive development with the aim to be climate positive for 2020, meaning that the redevelopment will be carbon neutral by 2020.

Potential Opportunities

The two examples above give a view of a smart city approach to sustainability but there are many others driven either by city authorities or governments, or citizens themselves. Ideas include:

- › Smarter public transportation and mass transit solutions
- › Provision of alternative vehicle technology to reduce or eliminate emissions
- › Use of sensor technology to measure real world emissions allowing policy actions to be taken on factual data. This approach gives rise to the potential positive use of blockchain technology to accurately capture and measure such data and provide rewards for positive behavior e.g. Solar Coin
- › Improved urban planning and public policy ideas to move living and workspace closer together, while reducing movements as well as improving green spaces to provide more carbon sinks
- › The development of urban agriculture such as vertical farming reducing the need for intensive farming and high food miles
- › Improved water management means more supply of potable water, less energy spent on production, less pollution and damaging climate impacts. Additionally, better quality of water means less diseases (A significant percentage of all human diseases is connected to water)
- › Improving reuse policies (and by extension recycling) results in less landfill and consequently a reduction in Methane and other greenhouse gas emissions. Equally this policy leads to more reclaiming on basic raw materials (glass, metals) resulting in less energy being spent on extraction/mining



So, a Smart City is not simply a technology, its an approach aided by technology to tackling some of the major issues in cities, towns and municipalities which when adopted in the right way can increase efficiency, citizen engagement and quality of life and can help us directly tackle major challenges such as climate change and air pollution head on.

This short article provides an introduction to these ideas. Our partner Pro Captum has developed a variety of training courses in these domains: <https://www.procaptum.com/courses> including standards based training on Smart City standards such ISO 37101 Management System for Sustainable Development.



The Cryptocurrency (R) evolution

Cryptocurrency was introduced for the first time in the course of the Second World War as the need for secure communication grew. Since then, it has evolved in the digital era with mathematical theory elements and computer science to encrypt online money, information and communication.

Yet, cryptocurrencies made their most important introduction from being an academic concept to a pragmatic tool in 2009, respectively when Bitcoin was created. Bitcoin accumulated a lot of attention in the following years, reaching its peak in 2013 when a Bitcoin unit was worth over \$1000. Moreover, Bitcoin's market value reached over \$2 billion in late 2017 followed up by a 50% plunge after a short period of months as a result of constant debates. Hence, two questions remain unanswered: Will these 'alternative' currencies, in the long run, replace conventional currencies and become as ubiquitous as euros and dollars or are they just big fuzz over nothing that will pass.

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In order to address any fear you may have about cryptocurrencies, it is necessary to take a closer look at the technology behind every cryptocurrency- the blockchain!

The Evolution of Cryptocurrencies

While technology evolved and internet and e-commerce were invented, traders needed a way to accept money on the internet in a secure way. This need led to the introduction of cryptocurrencies. Despite the origins of digital currencies dating back to the 1980s, it was only in 2008 that a cryptography researcher known to the world as Satoshi Nakamoto invented Bitcoin.

However, not everyone was aware that the first attempt at cryptocurrencies was made in the late 1980s. The ideas started as many petrol stations in the remote areas were being robbed for cash in the middle of the night. To change this, truck drivers were recommended to use cards instead of cash at the petrol station, and this way the stations were safer from the robbery. But even before this, in the early 80s, the American cryptographer David Chaum introduced the idea of digital cash in his research paper. Later on, he founded DigiCash Company and continued to further build his Internet money invention. Even though the idea was extraordinary and quite well commercialized, unfortunately David Chaum and his company made some missteps and ended up in bankruptcy in 1998. It wasn't until 2009, with the invention of Blockchain technology, that Bitcoin was 'reinvented'.

Despite being the most widely used and accepted digital currency, Bitcoin is not the only cryptocurrency, even though most cryptocurrencies follow its principles. When introduced, Bitcoin was so ahead of time and a skeptic idea that it didn't have any competitor. But later, with the growth of Bitcoin, more cryptocurrencies were invented hoping to become as well-known and accepted. Cryptocurrencies have made a significant progress since the idea was first introduced. However, they have a long way to go until they are widely accepted and adopted by the general public.

The Benefits Of Cryptocurrency Usage

Over the past years, cryptocurrencies have been experiencing a rapid increase in value, which has attracted the attention of many investors, regulators, financial companies and the media itself. These currencies have been attractive the following benefits:

- › **Security:** Unlike the traditional payment system where cash and credit cards are used for daily operations, cryptocurrencies cannot be counterfeited by the sender in the same way as charge-backs of credit cards. Additionally, the probability to steal your actual full cash wallet is higher than stealing your cryptocurrencies. Moreover, cryptocurrencies are designed in that way

that it is almost impossible to hack them due to the strong cryptography involved in the Blockchain model.

- › **Accessibility:** With regular currencies, there are also restrictions. A minor cannot open a bank account without the permission of his/her parents or a guardian's permission. Moreover, banks can charge you or close your account if your account balance drops below a certain amount. However, these barriers are non-existent with cryptocurrencies as they provide software's that can be downloaded for free by everyone.
- › **Global Recognition:** Individuals, who travel frequently or conduct business abroad, are quite familiar with the fact that their transactions are affected by the currency exchange rates. Having cryptocurrencies as a means of payment saves time and money which would otherwise be spent on transactions or exchange rate fees as it is universally recognized at a certain value.
- › **Anonymity:** While paying with a credit card for a product or service, you hand your personal information to an unknown person. Cryptocurrencies are regarded as anonymous in the sense that you send and receive currency via an address that is made up only of numbers and characters. Thus, it is very difficult to trace the address of a person in a real-world identity.

Will Cryptocurrencies ever be the standard currency?

Although cryptocurrencies and the blockchain technology itself present advantages that have stimulated their growth, there are several challenges which question the potential of cryptocurrencies to become mainstream currencies.

- › **Volatility :** Investing in cryptocurrencies presents a substantial risk due to the volatility of prices. Numerous experts have been very skeptical about investments in these currencies as they believe there

is not enough information but rather speculations. As the currency prices are unregulated, people are constantly lured by the high currency price, which drives the prices even higher. Alternatively, this might lead to a bubble creation which will eventually burst and cause substantial losses.

- › **Regulations:** Cryptocurrency transactions are decentralized by nature, meaning there is no regulatory body such as banks or governmental institution that controls them. This means that there is no safety mechanism that protects the users from fraud.
- › **Legality:** Due to a lack of governmental control, cryptocurrencies are prone to be used by criminals who use them to their advantage. Also, being anonymous and unable to trace, it becomes even more difficult for governmental authorities to trace their illicit activities.
- › **A medium of exchange:** One of the most important roles of currencies is to be accepted as a medium of exchange. Traditional currencies have no value themselves, but the fact that the public at large accepts them as a medium of exchange to buy goods and services makes them valuable. When comparing cryptocurrencies with the traditional currencies, the latter seems to have a higher advantage. Why? In every economy, governments issue taxes in order to fund their spending. As such, people will always seek for traditional currencies in order to pay for these taxes, unless the government accepts payment in the form of cryptocurrencies. However, governments are unlikely to take this step as they prefer taxes to be issued in the same currency as their liabilities and towards something they can control. So, does this make it difficult (if not impossible) for cryptocurrencies to be used for the majority of transactions in the economy?

BLOCKCHAIN THE TECHNOLOGY BEHIND CRYPTOCURRENCY

At least once, everyone must have asked themselves “How can I be sure that cryptocurrency is not a fraud?” In order to address any fear you may have about cryptocurrencies, it is necessary to take a closer look at the technology behind every cryptocurrency - **the Blockchain!**

“Blockchain” is probably a term that you have heard a lot lately. The Blockchain model and cryptocurrencies were originally designed together, thus it is impossible to separate these two concepts. Blockchain contains the list of every piece of data that has been sent through the network, as well as every single transaction and account. Moreover, it uses a peer-to-peer network of computers to validate transactions without a third-party involvement.

In simple words, Blockchain is a list of records called blocks, as the name implies, that grow continuously and are linked and secured by using cryptography. By design, Blockchain allows digital information to be distributed but not copied.

Below are some of the key advantages associated with implementing Blockchain technology:

1. **Resilience:** Blockchain technology is resilient as it doesn't have any central point of failure. Due to the encryption and chain nature of the blocks, records of historical transactions won't be affected despite any potential damage to the data.
2. **Security:** One of the main characteristics of the Blockchain is safety as the cryptographic nature of Blockchain transactions makes the network more secure. Also, as previously mentioned, Blockchain allows digital information to be distributed but not copied which prevents any user from changing the transactions.
3. **Disintermediation:** As Blockchain uses a peer-to-peer network of computers to validate transactions, it doesn't allow any interception from a third party.
4. **Lower costs:** Blockchain networks can reduce transaction costs as result of eliminating or reducing the reliance on intermediaries and associated costs. It can also be used by banks to reduce governance and audit costs and to provide better products with faster time.

As a decentralized ledger which keeps records of transactions that occur between peer-to-peer networks, the Blockchain technology has the potential to be applied in various useful ways beyond Bitcoin and Cryptocurrency. This important technological invention enables the transferring of assets across the internet without the help of a centralized third party. PwC gives us a more detailed insight on Blockchain's prospective advantage and its potential application in the near future:

Financial services: Cheaper and faster settlements in the financial industry resulting in cost reduction by billions as well as transparency improvement.

Automotive: Consumers might also manage the fractional ownership in autonomous cars by using the Blockchain technology.

Voting: By using the Blockchain code, people can vote through their smartphones, PCs and tables, which would result in immediate verifiable results.

Healthcare: The encrypted health information of patients can be shared with multiple providers without the threat of privacy breaches.

Nowadays, Blockchain technology is becoming more and more efficient, transparent and cost-effective for transactions. Chances are that Blockchain will go beyond Bitcoin and finance and will be applicable to various industries and areas.

Blockchain: A simple explanation

In order to better understand how Blockchain functions, Ivey Business School has portrayed its function with an analogy that compares Blockchains with the construction of a skyscraper. To start the construction, you need to start putting blocks on top of each other from the floor. Each of these blocks is linked with the previous block and contains its reference part. The reference part is similar to the DNA that the child inherits from his/her parents. That means each block contains the DNA of the previous block.

Now, let us assume that this skyscraper is the largest in the world and it can be seen by everyone. The blocks of the skyscraper are true and verifiable because everyone can see them. If we would want to change the position of a block in the skyscraper, we would have to change the memory of everyone who has confirmed that the block in the skyscraper exists and also change the other blocks that contain the "DNA" of the block that is being changed. Thus, the information of the blockchain is considered unchangeable.

Further, let's assume that each of the blocks is an information box which has transactions written in the form of code inside. Once enough transactions are created within the block, a new block is created and added to the blockchain. The process of connecting these blocks is done with computer power which requires that a complex mathematical problem is solved in order to guess the combination from a large pool of combinations. Whoever solves the mathematical problem first and connects the block, is rewarded with a cryptocurrency.

Source: Ivey Business School



The Future of Cryptocurrencies and The Blockchain Model

Some of the most common limitations that cryptocurrencies have such as one's financial assets can be wiped out online by a computer crash, or that a hacker may attack a virtual vault, can be overcome through the continual technology advancement. What will be even more challenging to avoid is one of the most elementary paradoxes of cryptocurrencies – the more popularity they gain, the more regulation and government inspection they will attract.

Also, even though the number of companies and important businesses that accept cryptocurrencies has increased, they are still a small minority. In order for cryptocurrencies to become omnipotent in the financial market they have to first become widely accepted by consumers. As a result of their relative complexity compared to the usual currencies that consumers are used to, they are likely to push away most consumers (apart from the ones that are technologically accustomed).

Hence, a cryptocurrency that aims to be prominent in the financial system has to fulfill widely differing criteria. Firstly, it would have to have the right amount of mathematical complexity that is needed to avoid the hacker attacks but also is easy enough to understand for consumers. Secondly, it has to be decentralized but also have the suitable consumer protection. Lastly, it would have to maintain user anonymity without risking tax evasion, money laundering, and other suspicious illegal activities.

Considering the difficulty of the above-mentioned criteria, is it possible that most cryptocurrencies could have the features in a few years' time that combat with the disadvantages that cryptocurrencies have to face? Bitcoin is an example of a cryptocurrency which is gaining a tremendous attention and large approval from many stakeholders – perhaps foreshadowing a not so distant future.

A Business Continuity Discussion with Renata Davidson

FOUNDER & CEO OF DAVIDSON CONSULTING LLP

Renata Davidson is the founder and CEO of Davidson Consulting & Partners Ltd, a partnership of experts specializing in business continuity, operational risk management and process management. She was the first professional in Central and Eastern Europe to be certified by Disaster Recovery Institute International (DRI). In 1999, Renata advised Poland's Ministry of Internal Affairs in the development of the National Action Plan in relation to the Y2K problem. She also held a position of Expert at the Ministry of Infrastructure.



1. What are the biggest challenges of lecturing Business Continuity?

The most prominent challenge usually is a hermetic language used in Business Continuity. It is essential to take a good deal of effort and care to make sure, that every term is well explained, preferably in a real-life context. Students will need to communicate with their counterparts in real life, and I want them to feel comfortable during these interactions and speak the same language as the rest of the BCM tribe.

2. Which are the most common questions that your students ask about Disaster Recovery?

There are several common questions about Disaster Recovery, which my students ask. First, there is always a question about the criteria for defining the Recovery Time Objectives and Recovery Point Objective. How to obtain reliable requirements from the business process owners? Second, there are also questions about technicalities: what systems and services should be protected? What should be the distance between primary and backup locations? Third, there are questions about organizational issues: how to build the IT Crisis Team with existing head-count limits? How to co-operate with critical service providers?

3. What differentiates a face to face training session from all the information available online on ISO 22301?

I firmly believe in the value of the first-hand experience. Everybody can buy and study the standard by him/herself, but in case of the training delivered by a well experienced and active BCM expert, there is nothing more valuable than having an opportunity to ask any question regarding Business Continuity and receive an in-depth answer.

4. What are the clauses that you are most interested to lecture about ISO 22301?

The most important for me to delegate is clause 8 of ISO 22301, which contains the core requirements of Business Continuity Management Systems. I cannot stress enough the importance of the Business Impact Analysis, which constitutes the foundation of every formal BCM system.

5. As a trainer, on which areas of Business Continuity Management do you find yourself spending the most time on?

I think it's Business Impact Analysis, mainly due to the significance of its results. If the BIA is done in a wrong way, one won't get the reliable answers to the most vital questions: What area is critical? Why is it critical? What are the BCM requirements for particular activities? Usually, the students are also the most interested in this subject.

6. Have you ever integrated personalized learning tools into your courses?

No, but I wish I could. I think it's a great help to both: the trainer and the student.

7. Not every student learns at the same rate or at the same level. How do you ensure that everyone in the program develops their skills?

That's true. That's why I prefer teaching small groups and always encourage asking questions, even if I will be interrupted. The BCM projects are mainly linear, and to understand one project stage the person must know the previous one.

8. What have you learned from your students?

A lot! First, when we discuss different real-life experiences from my consulting practice, they often jump in and share their examples. It gives some insight into specifics of a wide range of different industries.

9. How did your professional experience affect the learning strategies that you use?

My consulting experience had a noticeable effect on my learning strategies. With each clause of the International Standardized Profiles (ISP) standard, I advise my students on how to implement or verify this particular requirement within their specific organization. I warn them about potential obstacles and give alternative ways of completing the necessary tasks.

10. Describe a successful teaching experience that you have had as a trainer. What made it successful?

It was the training in one of the European Union agencies. I assign the success of this experience to the fact that the participants wanted to implement the newly acquired knowledge in their organization within a short time after the training and therefore they had a lot of motivation. What made this lecturing experience even more interesting was the culture of their organization which allowed its employees to speak very openly about their strengths and weaknesses and this allowed us to go deeper into the subject matter.

11. What do you consider to be the best part of teaching?

The best part of teaching is learning new things. Every training gives me some extra information, additional insights, and broadens my perspective on BCM in general.

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Prepare very well, review in advance the training materials and just be yourself, open and ready to explain. Stay curious, and never underestimate your students.



Myanmar: The Golden Land

Once upon a time, a consultant was tired, stressed and zealously wanted to please a customer by meeting an unrealistic deadline.





About the author



Devesh is a real globetrotter! He has built a reputation by consulting and training throughout North America, Europe, the Middle-East, Japan, South Korea, China, Australia, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific. Devesh Pandit is a recognized expert in the fields of Quality, Information Security, Privacy, Risk and Business Continuity Management with over 35+ years of experience covering Industries: Card Manufacturing, Card Personalization, Fulfillment and Distribution, Healthcare, Pharmaceutical, Financial Commercial and Retail Banking, Telecommunication, Defense, and Governmental organizations.

Devesh Pandit
Lead Management System Auditor and Instructor, E4 Security Consulting, LLC

Overwhelmed by the amount of tasks, I kept working on my laptop not realizing that the gentleman sitting next to me was so relaxed and serene as if the world was completely free of problems.

The gentleman in the next seat was a monk from Burma, now known as Myanmar. After I stowed my laptop, I began to converse with him so that our journey would appear to be more pleasant and shorter. Certainly, I was curious and asked many questions about Myanmar, in terms of what can one do there, and how to get to Myanmar. I was reluctant to ask about the nightlife, but the monk was very wise, and explained how once he too was a layman; thus, he talked about the life in general as a layman, and I indeed admired his openness. I also asked him on the methods used to reduce stress. I remember him smiling and answering without blinking an eye: "Drop your two carry-on bags: likes, and dislikes." We should avoid trying to change others, but rather attempt to accept them by changing ourselves - when we realize the benefits of changing our perspectives, the likes and dislikes vanish and fail to control our lives, Buddhism teaches. This was indeed, such a straightforward and powerful message.

Upon my two visits to Myanmar, I noticed that this place remains an unexplored "paradise". The beaches, the nature trails, bicycle trails, rivers, mountains, and wildlife are certainly an outlet for relaxation and provide a chance to escape the mundane. The religious and spiritual sites and places, on the other side, offer the opportunity to learn and practice meditation. I visited Dhammajoti, the most famous meditation center, where one can spend 10 to 20 or 30-day meditation practice.

Doing Business in Myanmar

I have not conducted any business in Myanmar; however, as I wanted to explore a credit card manufacturing and personalization opportunity, I investigated the leads while I was there. What I realized is that conducting business in Myanmar requires patience like in any other South Asian country. One has to attend a first, second, or even a third business meeting so that both parties get to know each other. A yes is not always a yes and no never means no in Myanmar; however, the business community is hardworking, religious and ethical, and the respect for the elderly, the hospitality and the exchange of small gifts and favors are ingrained in the society.

The Myanmar's tourist destinations and attractions

1. *Shwedagon Pagoda*, also known as the "winking wonder", remains unrivaled as temple, meeting place, and symbol of national identity. This pagoda enshrines strands of Buddha's hair and other holy relics.
2. *Mount Kyaiktiyo*, or the Golden Rock, is one of the most important pilgrim sites of Myanmar. The Golden Rock, the legend says, placed on the very edge of a 1100 meter hill has survived multiple earthquakes throughout ages as it is supported by a hair from Buddha. The first waves of sunset that make the Golden Rock shine sharper than ever, the ride to the Golden Rock, or the hotels and restaurants located at the top of the hill from which one can enjoy the view of the valley, are all exhilarating reminders of living in the moment.

The typical food and drinks are similar to other South Asia countries, namely steamed rice with chicken, Bitter Mellon, Durian, Mango, Pork, Eggplant, Cucumbers, and Radish. No, you will not starve if you are vegetarian or vegan, as you will have plenty of options. One can also enjoy the Western, Thai and Indian cuisine, without spending more than USD 15.





Who are the Burmese people? Myanmar people? These are Bamar, Chin, Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Kayin, Mon and Rakhine people, most speaking Burmese, following Theravada Buddhism where every male once in lifetime ordains as a monk.



Burmese people drink, on average, less than four liters a year—about ten small bottles of local brand beers. Many people in Myanmar perceive beer as a luxury drink. On the other hand, in the neighboring countries, Thailand and Vietnam, the annual per capita beer consumption is 25 and 30 liters, respectively.

If you want a beer in a bar, make sure to make a kissing sound. When the Burmese want to get a waiter's attention, they make a kissing sound, usually two or three short kisses, similar to the sound one might make when calling a cat. Walk down the 19 Street in Yangon's Chinatown, and you'll hear that kissing sound a lot. This narrow, pedestrian-only street is where the Burmese come to drink. Restaurants line both sides of the street, and chairs and tables are set out in the front. The local brew is Myanmar Beer, and it's cheap -- about 60 cents for a glass of draught.

Tea in Myanmar is served and consumed by almost everyone—young and old, male and female, lay people and monks—drink tea. Drinking tea without milk and sugar is the custom throughout Myanmar. Tea is served at every social or religious ceremony or function, and is mainly produced in Palaung and Shan ethnic areas. In every household, there is at least one member of the family that prefers to have a cup of plain tea as soon as she or he gets up from bed. Tea shops are found in every corner of the city, town, and large village, and are important social gathering places, mostly for men. Tea shops are crowded with people young and old alike. Holding a cup of plain tea and slowly sipping is considered as a relaxing activity.

Myanmar is a developing country that in the eyes of many is not for the ordinary tourist. But for the rest of you that are eager to drop your two carry-on bags, touch the mountains, run across the damp lowlands, and interact with the heterogeneous people, all I can say is: what a great destination. Enjoy what I have enjoyed and enrich even more your visit to Myanmar.



A BRIEF REVIEW OF
BELARUS' CERTIFICATION MARKET

Belarus Requirements Get Unified and Become More Sophisticated For Strangers

About the authors

Victoria Glushakova
Marketer



She has gained a lot of experience in website development, design, email marketing, analytics. She has successfully passed courses on copywriting (educational center "Leader"). She also organizes and conducts market research.

Natalia Ivanova
Lead Auditor, Certified Expert, Lead Expert



PECB ISO 9001 Lead Auditor, ISO 37001:2016 Lead Auditor, BSI ISO 13485 certified expert, a leading expert on ISO 9001, ISO 13485, GMP, ISO16949, ISO 50001

and plants, and ensure energy efficiency and savings, while preventing and controlling any actions that can harm consumers. Certification of goods throughout the entire territory of the EAEU is carried out in accordance with the Technical Regulations. Some countries of the Eurasian Economic Union have still preserved some national technical regulations and standards, such as GOST-R, ST RK, STB for certain goods, i.e. for pesticides and medical products, while new standards that contain almost the same requirements as the ISO standards are adopted.

The TR EAEU Certificate is a requirement for organizations importing and selling goods within the territory of EAEU member-states (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan). This certificate confirms that the certified product meets all requirements of the Technical Regulation and is authorized to be imported and used within the EAEU's territory. The technical regulations are valid only on the territory of the EAEU and this is a legal requirement.

After the unification technical requirements were introduced in the EAEU's territory, the entire certification procedure became even more sophisticated; products certified in the Customs Union must be marked with the EAC mark.

The TR EAEU Certificate is issued within a certain period of time from one to five years for a batch of products or for a single product. When verifying and confirming if products are meeting the technical requirements of the EAEU, it often includes the collection of samples for testing, and in some cases an expert visiting the production site. All certificates drawn up or issued by the certification body shall be registered and entered into the general register of the Conformity Certificates on the website of Rosakkreditatsiya Russian Accreditation Body.

The Belarus Certification System Experiences Unification

The process of integration of a number of countries including Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has long fueled the technical regulation concerning the sales of goods and services with the territory of its member-states.

The main goal of the technical regulation is to ensure the protection of human life and (or) health, property, environment, animals

Compliance with the requirements of EAEU technical regulations is mandatory. However, voluntary certification shall be conducted only in relation to products not covered by technical regulations and those that (prior to enforcement of technical regulations) are not included on the List.

Why is the Voluntary Certification Carried On?

Since not all products are subject to mandatory confirmation of conformity, some manufacturers issue a voluntary certificate and go through the same confirmation procedures that are required for mandatory certification.

This is done to improve the competitiveness of their products. Many supermarkets prefer that their shelves are filled with quality and safe goods. Buyers are also becoming more aware of the importance of healthy- and safe-products and tend to purchase certified products.

One of the most popular voluntary certification systems within the EAEU territory is the use of international standards provided by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). These standards contain recommendations and tools for companies and organizations that are committed to continuously meeting their customer's requirements through the high quality of the products and services they provide. Ranked as one of the most popular ISO scheme in EAEU, the ISO 9001:2015 establishes the criteria for the quality management system and is the most sought after on the EAEU territory. This standard can be used by any organization regardless of the field of activity. In fact, there are more than one million companies and organizations in more than 170 countries certified against the ISO 9001 requirements.

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The ISO 9001 standard is based on a number of quality management principles such as customer orientation, motivation and involvement of senior management, process approach, and continuous improvement.

But there is a number of exceptions when certification in accordance with the requirements of ISO 9001 standard is mandatory. For example, the establishment of a quality management system provides the access to contract tendering, construction tendering, as well as the construction advantage (in design, survey, engineering organization, supplier goods) when carrying out procurement during construction. The ISO 9001 certificate plays a significant role when joining to residents of Hi-Tech Park (HTP), and your organization is unlikely to be accepted without a certificate.

To register medical products, manufacturers are required to implement the ISO 13485 management system.





Customers Seek International Certification Bodies to Enter New Markets

Manufacturers of goods and services seeking to enter foreign markets often have to apply to renowned international certification bodies since the national bodies are not accredited internationally for the required standards.

The Belarusian State Institute for Standardization and Certification (BelGISS) and the Belarusian State Institute for Metrology (BelGIM) are the two only accredited national bodies and are considered to be the most trustful in Belarus.

Still, there are a number of representatives of international bodies accredited by IAF offering a growing range of international certificates in Belarus, such as PECB. These certification bodies have gained a long record and earned trust within the business community for their proficiency and customer-orientation.

Countries	ISO 9001	ISO 13485	ISO/IEC 27001	ISO 22000	ISO 14001
Belarus	175	5	2	22	76
Russia	5083	77	62	267	1037
Kazakhstan	533	2	12	9	148
Armenia	28	0	22	7	7
Kyrgyzstan	4	0	0	1	0

Source: ISO, 2016

Easy-Standart LLC, a Minsk-based certifying company has been working hand-in-glove for a couple of years now with PECB, a global provider of training, examination, audit, and certification services. With PECB, we have faced a number of challenges enabling the business of our customers to gather momentum and have more advanced standards being applied securely and properly.

During these years, Easy-Standart has been cooperating with many national companies. For example, Alterbel, as an outstanding local construction business, has gained the ISO 9001 certificate and succeeded to win a challenging international tender. Being the largest private medical producer in Belarus, Rubikon Company has succeeded to implement ISO 13485, and obtain the CE-mark to kick off export to EU. RedNavis, a Minsk-based IT company has managed to sign a significant contract with one of their major customers for the sole reason of having a certified ISO/IEC 27001 Information Security Management System in place.

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