

A Time for American Leadership in Cybersecurity

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Fellows of non-partisan think tank ICIT¹ frequently get called upon to provide expert cybersecurity advice and analyses to congressional members and government leaders. On the evening of April 30th, 2015, we participated in a fascinating discussion with Michael Echols, Director of the Cyber Joint Program Management Office.² This discussion made one thing clear to me: we must collectively embrace the opportunity, as a nation, to power America forward through cybersecurity.

The success of some twenty-six million small business is critical to the American economy. The cybersecurity threat against them is so intense and the loss of intellectual capital and finances so high that this threat has become a national problem. Although many small organizations are being attacked with devastating results, the media's focus has been on the sensational news of major breaches. A national collaborative effort by the private sector is essential to solve this problem. Such a drive will be a dramatic innovation and productivity engine which will also power substantial macro-economic benefits. This is an opportunity for America to lead in cybersecurity as we have led before in building computers, implementing networks, and conducting business on the internet.

The solution, as described by Echols, is the organic nationwide development of Information Sharing and Analysis Organizations (ISAOs)³ by communities of businesses with common interests. These could be groups of local banks, local businesses, local healthcare organizations, major companies such as Walmart or Ford and their supply chains, and countless other possibilities. These organizations will require American technology companies – particularly small, nimble organizations – to perform the technical program management and continuous cybersecurity operations services of these ISAOs, as managed cybersecurity service providers. These service providers can also train their clients in the appropriate use of technology, safe handling of data, and the protection of their intellectual property.

Collectives of small businesses can afford services which they cannot obtain on their own. The model will not only be able to protect businesses and their intellectual

capital, but will provide an opportunity for them to adopt continuous technological advances in a timely manner. Participation in these cooperatives will become a badge of distinction. The government could provide incentives such as tax breaks or cash awards to make it even more attractive for businesses to participate.⁴ The entire effort is likely to result in a powerful surge of American productivity, innovation, and prosperity.

As we embark on this journey, we must reflect on how we got here. Business leaders did not approach cybersecurity as a business issue; they viewed it as a technology issue which could be solved by implementing some technology. Our educational programs own a share of the blame since our MBA programs do not contain enough information technology or cybersecurity curricula and our information technology and cybersecurity programs do not contain enough business material such as mission-focused risk management, governance, and business leadership. Fixing these issues will require an effort of American leadership in business, information technology, and education to focus on holistic cybersecurity. 🗔

Sources

- 1 <www.icitech.org>
- 2 <<http://www.dhs.gov/office-cybersecurity-and-communications>>
- 3 <<http://www.dhs.gov/isao>>
- 4 <<http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/dhs-ee13636-analytic-report-cybersecurity-incentives-study.pdf>>

About the Author:



Dr. Mansur Hasib has twelve years of experience as a Chief Information Officer. He holds a Doctor of Science in Cybersecurity (IA), the prestigious CISSP, PMP, and CPHIMS certifications, and has published two books on cybersecurity. He has also developed a holistic Master of Science and Doctor of Science program in Business Information Technology and Cybersecurity. His widely acclaimed book *Cybersecurity Leadership* was recently released as an audiobook narrated in the author's own voice at <http://www.audible.com/pd/Business/Cybersecurity-Leadership-Audiobook/B00TYUG82Q>. For more information visit www.cybersecurityleadership.com.

