

SECURITY

# 2019 NACACS IT SECURITY LEADERS' SUMMIT RECAP

**ISACA**<sup>®</sup>

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# ABSTRACT

In May at ISACA's North America CACS event, a select group of security leaders met and discussed challenges and shared best practices in information security. This recap summarizes the discussions in order to provide other security leaders with real-world examples and practical solutions, to aid those in mid-management looking to advance their careers, and to share the leaders' insights with the broader community of security professionals.

## Introduction

Senior business technologists engaged in a panorama of business and technology issues, from data governance and privacy, to emerging tech and cyber threats, to cybercrime and law enforcement, and paused to reflect on leadership cultures and characteristics, all during the ISACA Security Leaders' Summit at NA CACS.

ISACA's new CEO David Samuelson welcomed the attendees and emphasized the importance of the event. He noted that 60% of small businesses go out of business after one security incident.

## State of Cybersecurity

After Samuelson's greeting, attendees were briefed on highlights from ISACA's 2019 State of Cybersecurity Research by Frank Downs, Director ISACA Cybersecurity Practices. Downs discussed the report's workforce and skills gap data themes, noting that "fewer candidates are well-prepared for cybersecurity roles" and security and HR leaders are taking up increasingly "creative ways" to find qualified candidates for their open positions.

- "Pay attention to differences across generations and personalities" to get the best out of their management and teams;
- Emphasize the importance of soft skills, for themselves and their teams;
- Promote the importance of gaining professional certifications "to get people to understand and get things at a deeper level."

Referencing the 2018 Leadership Skills list from Forrester Research and adding his own experience, Fitzgerald encouraged the audience to:

- Plan a path away from operations
- Refine risk management processes to business language'
- Widen vision to privacy, data management and compliance
- Build a support network for insights
- Leverage new business skills to create focus and attention of business leaders in their organizations.

## Organizational Observations

A highlight of the event was the spectrum of leadership and organizational observations from veteran ISACA contributor Todd Fitzgerald, managing director, CISO Spotlight. Regarding organizational structure, Fitzgerald said that while "CISOs still generally are reporting up through CIOs" he recommended that the function be moved out from under the CIO, given the strategic priority and importance of security, especially in corporate boardrooms.

Laws, regulations, policies and procedures represent the "shared values" and "tone" of security leaders throughout their organizations, according to Fitzgerald, who added, "every CISO needs to understand the language of privacy" which can differ globally.

Fitzgerald also provided additional advisories to the audience, including:

## Collaboration is Key

Fitzgerald set the pace for sage advice offered by other summit speakers. In a panel on data governance and privacy, Billy Spears, senior vice president and CISO, loanDepot, emphasized the importance of a "best friend" relationship with legal teams in organizations; to effectively manage privacy a partnership with the legal department must be formed and maintained, taking proactive steps to ensure compliance in light of GDPR, CCPA and Canada's Privacy Law and to tackle reviews,

gap analyses and updates to organizational privacy policies now rather than later.

Adding a local, high-profile perspective, City of Los Angeles CISO Timothy Lee recapped the disciplined approach he and his team apply every day to manage on the order of 1-billion records per day and 7-million attacks blocked daily. Lee listed the city's top cyber challenges:

- Humans are the weakest link
- Rapidly evolving threat landscape
- Expanding attack surfaces
- Big data ("the speed, volume and varieties of data")

- The constant struggle of business versus cyber needs (for priorities, resources, etc.)

In addition to illustrating the city's cybersecurity roadmap, based on the NIST Cybersecurity Framework (figure 1) Lee pointed to the importance of collaboration, referencing the LA Cyber Lab, a high-profile, nonprofit public-private partnership first announced in late 2017. Championed by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, the technology platform, threat intelligence and analysis services, and resource center serves private businesses and public institutions. It has been nationally recognized as a model and is expanding its capabilities due to a 2018 Department of Homeland Security grant.

FIGURE 1: City of Los Angeles: Cybersecurity Strategy



Source: NIST Cybersecurity Framework

# Emerging Technologies

Turning from law enforcement, governance and regulation to technology, a panel on emerging technology debated the opportunities and challenges of artificial intelligence, machine learning, quantum computing and, as panelist Jenai Marinkovic put it, “extended reality,” a combination of virtual reality and augmented reality. Marinkovic, chief technology and security officer for Beyond, suggested that ER, VR and AR could be used for training and learning solutions for cyber security teams.

“What about role-based digital assistants for the every-more-automated tasks in cybersecurity?” Marinkovic asked.

The technology-focused panel also gave practical, and seemingly welcome, advice to attendees challenged every day by “the 90 percent of vendors at my door who claim to have AI,” as one attendee put it. The panel advised the attendees on how to identify vendors with authentic AI solutions.

## Conclusion

Similar to previous Summits, the 2019 NACACS Security Leaders' Summit provided cogent and thought-provoking content to information security leaders. Diverse topics, such as workforce development, navigating cybersecurity leadership challenges, data governance and privacy, emerging technology, threat landscape, and cybercrime and law enforcement strategies were discussed. Attendees emerged from the sessions with new information that they are ready to put into action.

Andy De La Cruz, network security at Aruba Networks, said vendors should be able to show their machine learning model; convey how and what they derive in valuable analytics from their AI solution; and convey data collection methods.

Rich Lindberg, virtual CISO with Nth Generation, said he would ask vendors if they have data scientists behind their AI solutions; to explain the “core” of their AI engine in two minutes or less; and probe why their offering is meaningful to his business.

Marinkovic echoed both De La Cruz and Lindberg, adding that she challenges suppliers to convey fit. “To me it’s about security, enterprise architecture—does my organization and architecture have a gap and does what they offer fill it and does it help my team work better,” she said.

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