

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

This week's Top Line intends to focus attention on the realization that we may not know all of the ways the coronavirus pandemic will alter, or completely remake, the systems that undergird our reality, but we know that it will. From the systems of the human body to our economic and geopolitical infrastructure, coronavirus is showing us what is really there. Now is an opportunity to build the next generation's systems stronger and more resilient than ever, and SSI can help point the way.

I made a change to the last sentence, so should probably use this version.

Coronavirus has disrupted the world order and the systems that create it in ways we still do not comprehend; and likely won't for many years. What we do know is the disease has impacted everyone, everywhere, in some way, shape or form. A pandemic was predicted by epidemiologists, and like death and taxes, it was a certainty. However, what the disease would be, and how it would interact with the many systems that undergird our reality, was unknown. By 'many systems,' we mean the systems of the human body, as well as health, economic, social and geopolitical systems that create the world order. Consider the disease as a stressor. When a stressor hits a system, it allows one to identify the vulnerabilities and breakages in each system. Covid-19, in many ways, was the perfect stressor for our time because it is easily transmissible and therefore able to take advantage of a globalized world, while creating enough damage and death to be significant. While we don't know or understand all of the ways this pandemic will change our life systems, we are relatively certain that it will alter them. In the United States, we are quickly realizing the depth of issues with our health, social net, economic and education systems, to name just a few. According to U.N. Secretary General António Guterres, this pandemic is "[the largest disruption of education ever.](#)" While we do not consider coronavirus an existential crisis, it certainly is disruptive to our way of life. This should give all leaders pause, and immediately push all of us to reconsider what we know, and to be open to alternative perspectives and solutions to the growing crises.

Question to Consider:

How must IT policy and training be adapted to sustain the increase in remote working? How regularly - and to what 'depth' - must we 'test' our structures, using third party professionals if we are to remain compliant and retain the confidence of our client base?

COVID-19: THE HIGHLIGHTS

Google Cloud and Harvard have teamed up to release [COVID-19 forecasting models](#). Companies have [accelerated their use of APM](#) (Application Performance Monitoring) as employees continue to work from home. Post-COVID-19 venture capital and funding [may now come with restrictions](#) as investors do not want to travel. The lack of travel and insertion of investment capital could point to centralized economic centers, similar to the Silicon Valley boom of the early 2000's. A recent [state department release](#) pointed to underreporting of COVID-19 cases. Global underreporting may also be an issue as [Iran's mortality numbers](#) are in conflict. Vietnam is currently responding to a more transmissible form of COVID-19, "[The infection rate is about five and six people, compared to the older strains with the rate of 1.8 to 2.2 people...](#)" Real property may experience a further downturn with, "[With mortgages being harder to obtain, viewings being harder to conduct and estate agents and solicitors having a reduced workforce.](#)" [Large scale testing](#) is now being sampled in the sewers of major cities, on a global level. Mental fatigue due this pandemic has evolved into [self-harm](#). [The youth infection rate has tripled in five months, creating a larger viral footprint. Further, there is now evidence for a direct link to infected children and neurological side effects. Global debt crisis may be magnified](#) due to COVID-19, and the question of default is looming for private businesses and governments.

BEYOND THE NOISE: The 'New Normal'

One thing that business leaders have identified during the lockdown period is that remote working is a realistic option for many of their employees. The benefits of this are many and include, amongst many others: a reduction in the need for expensive business premises and supporting infrastructure; a more flexible workforce; a larger hiring pool of potential talent available due to flexible working patterns. Given the potential legal exposure to business by enforcing a return to 'traditional' working practices, there is significant financial and HR benefit to maintaining a remote workforce, where applicable. Although, [some companies](#) are now bringing back their workforce to a centralized location. It does however, come with additional risks that should be addressed. Namely, HR needs to work with managers and employees to define measurable and achievable productivity standards, and CSOs and CISOs need to harmonize and even merge their structures to protect the business from the myriad of new cyber threats that it will be exposed to. Where corporations may have previously had to harden their IT infrastructure in a relatively small number of facilities, each home worker now represents an 'office location', with a node of potential vulnerability that must be addressed. Otherwise businesses may find themselves paralyzed through targeted attacks on IT infrastructure that may be simply malicious or more criminal in nature.

Questions to Consider:

How must IT policy and training be adapted to sustain the increase in remote working? How regularly – and to what 'depth' - must we 'test' our structures, using third party professionals if we are to remain compliant and retain the confidence of our client base?

TRUSTED RESOURCES: for numbers & guidance

[Johns Hopkins University](#) – Coronavirus Resource Center

[World Health Organization](#) – COVID-19 Pandemic

[Center for Disease Control](#) – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Please contact Secure Source International at info@securesource.com to schedule a leadership roundtable with our intelligence and security experts to dive into these topics and discuss security and safety related best-practices.