

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

The path of the coronavirus has affected all aspects of life and disrupted the global economy. U.N. Secretary General António Guterres has cited the pandemic as “[the largest disruption of education ever](#)”. And until a [vaccine](#) is discovered, which could be for some time, the problems associated with COVID-19 are not going away. Physical, psychological, and economic factors have created additional strains on the general populous. Multiple measures, including social distancing, have been taken in an attempt to slow COVID-19. Social distancing, in turn, has forced a large part of the American conversation to migrate online, and has brought a slew of negativity with it. As some social media sites respond reactively, proactive thinkers are fast-developing plans to [layer interactions through metadata structuring](#). Reactive planning may be seen as limiting the 1st Amendment, while proactive planning may be seen as curtailing conversations to only interested parties. This type of layering will, most likely, be integrated into most online communications over the next few years.

Massive social unrest now exists in all major US cities, and law enforcement agencies are being accused by [Amnesty International](#) of using excessive force in dealing with protestors. Violence across America has shaken civility to its core, “At a little before 11 p.m., several dozen protestors began to shatter the windows of the Justice Center. [They entered the building, trashing the interior and lighting random fires inside.](#)”

The Presidential election, [and the potential of mail-in voting](#), has everyone wondering who will lead the United States through the challenges that these catastrophic events have caused. Politics, social injustice, poverty and the media has made the situation ripe for more widespread protest, criminality, and violence. Furthermore, “[the current U.S. Security Environment is ripe for disruption.](#)” Strong consistent leadership will be needed to galvanize America, and the free world, in navigating these turbulent seas.

“The only defense against the world is a thorough knowledge of it.”

-John Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education

Question to Consider:

How must we improvise and adapt as a business if we are to profitably and safely operate in this environment?

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.