

Thursday, August 27, 2020

It would be difficult to overestimate how drastically the novel coronavirus has affected our world. U.N. Secretary General António Guterres cited the pandemic as “[the largest disruption of education ever.](#)” And until a [vaccine](#) is discovered, which will take some time, the problems associated with COVID-19 are not going away. In addition to the virus itself, the physical, psychological, and economic factors that come with it have created additional strains on the general populous. The measures that have been taken in an attempt to slow COVID-19 have brought their own concerns. Social distancing, for example, has forced a large part of the American conversation to migrate online, and has brought a slew of negativity with it.

The turmoil from COVID-19 has been compounded of course by the massive social unrest that exists in many major U.S. cities. Politics, social injustice, and poverty have made the situation ripe for more widespread protest, criminality, and violence (See “[the current U.S. Security Environment is ripe for disruption](#)”).

Added to all this, we have the fall Presidential election, which has everyone wondering who will lead the United States through the challenges that these catastrophic events have caused. The election itself will be affected by the [potential of mail-in voting](#). Strong consistent leadership will be needed to galvanize America, and the free world, in navigating these turbulent seas.

Questions to Consider:

How must we improvise and adapt as a business if we are to profitably and safely operate in this environment? Are we secure in this unprecedented time, and how do we know?

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 2000s. Real property may experience a further downturn “[with mortgages being harder to obtain, viewings being harder to conduct and estate agents and solicitors having a reduced workforce.](#)” Mental fatigue due this pandemic has led to [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.](#) Vietnam is responding to a more transmissible form of COVID-19 where “[The infection rate is about five and six people, compared to the](#)

[older strains with the rate of 1.8 to 2.2 people.”](#) [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 include: a reduction in the need for expensive business premises and supporting infrastructure; a more flexible workforce; and, 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 possible. The risks that come with bringing a workforce back to a centralized location also need to be addressed. 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 new cyber threats to which it will be exposed. 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 but could also be 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

[Centers 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.