

The Mailshot

Monthly communication of ISACA London Chapter

I'd like to wish all London Chapter members all the best for 2003!

I wonder how many of us exploit our ISACA membership when we travel abroad. In almost all major international destinations we travel to, you're now likely to find an ISACA Chapter who will welcome visitors from other Chapters.

It might be a good idea to look on the Chapter website for your foreign destination before you leave to see if they have any events, such as Chapter meetings that you could perhaps visit as a guest.

I think that you'll be pleasantly surprised at the warmth of the welcome that is offered to visiting Chapter members.

Obviously, language is not a problem if you're visiting, North America or the Antipodes. However, in most Chapters in Europe, Africa and the Far East, lack of knowledge of the local language shouldn't present a problem.

If your visit abroad and a local Chapter event happen to coincide, then why not give it a try! It's probably better than spending the night in your hotel.

It's That Time of Year Again!

By the time you receive this, it will probably be opportune to issue a gentle reminder to those of you who have not sent your membership renewal and CPE hours for the year ended

31st December 2002. As I've said before, all CISA's have worked hard for their certification and I'm sure that you'll agree that it isn't wise to place it in jeopardy by not renewing ISACA membership and submitting your CPE hours.

Special Interest Groups

It's now looking very likely that we will start a COBIT Special Interest Group (SIG). For those of you new to Special Interest Groups, they are very much member driven affairs. Periodic meetings take place attended by those who have an interest in the topic. Most SIGs produce a deliverable e.g. an Audit Plan, whereby the experiences of the participants can be pooled in a way that can benefit the membership as a whole, as well as the individuals involved in the SIG. In the recent past, we have run some very successful SIGs.

If you're interested in the COBIT SIG, then you should contact either Kamal Khan (Kamal.Khan@rabobank.com) or John Hunter (mailbox@jhunter.u-net.com) I'll give more information in the next Mailshot.

January Presentation

The North of England Chapter President, Ray Butler, CISA will give this month's presentation, on the subject of Spreadsheet Fraud.

It is a regrettable fact that whilst we spend a fair amount of our time ensuring that our major computing resources and applications are under

control, we tend to ignore such things as spreadsheets, which can often sit on a user's C drive away from any form of oversight.

I'm sure that Ray will provide a valuable insight into an area that is regrettably much neglected by the audit community.

Please don't forget to register in advance if you plan on attending

January Membership Meeting

23 January 2003, 5.30pm
ABN Amro, 250 Bishopsgate
"The Subversive Spreadsheet and how to tame it"
Ray Butler

Academic research over the last 15 years has shown that between 20-30% of all spreadsheet models and applications contain errors. In the UK the tax authorities have found that one in ten Spreadsheets used by businesses to calculate their VAT (emphatically not their most complex application !) contain material errors. Because spreadsheets are commonly used to re-process and re-interpret data from corporate systems for management use, they are commonly found at the highest-impact end of the audit trail. One error in a Spreadsheet will therefore subvert all the controls in all the systems feeding into it

The session will summarise reasons for concern about spreadsheets, Risk assessment, testing (including SpACE, the world-beating spreadsheet audit utility developed by HM Customs and

Excise, and some recent spreadsheet errors.

Ray Butler started in Information Systems audit with H M Customs & Excise in the days when officers were allowed to carry a cutlass on official business. He has been concerned about the risks from errors in spreadsheets since they became widely available in the mid-1980s, and pioneered the use of Computer-Assisted Audit techniques to support the testing of spreadsheets by VAT inspectors. He produced the standard training material and guidance for Customs & Excise officers testing spreadsheets, and was a member of the team that produced SpACE, the Department's own spreadsheet testing methodology and software recently judged best on the market in an independent test by Salford University's IS Institute.

Ray's papers and articles have appeared in academic and auditing publications including the IS Control Journal, and he has spoken at such international gatherings as the Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences and EuroCACS..

He is a founder member and past chairman of the European Spreadsheet Risk Interest Group (EuSpRIG), president of the Northern England Chapter of the Information Systems Audit & Control Association (ISACA) and a member of the international membership Board

Ray is currently Corporate Risk Management Adviser with the Highways Agency.

If you wish to attend the January Membership Meeting, please email Nancy on nancy@isaca.org.uk to reserve your place.

Membership Meetings 2002/2003

26 September 2002
Information Governance
 (FSA,N2 & the IT Auditor)
Vernon Poole
 KPMG, 20 Farringdon Street

24 October 2002
Implementing IT Governance
Paul Williams
 KPMG, Salisbury Square

28 November 2002
Control Over Internal & External Outsourcing
Charles Mansour
 ABN-Amro, 250 Bishopsgate

19 December 2002
Internet Threats & Intrusion Detection Systems
Dr Neil Barrett
 ABN-Amro, 250 Bishopsgate

23 January 2003
Spreadsheet Fraud
Ray Butler
 ABN Amro, 250 Bishopsgate

27 February 2003
Information Security
Speaker to be confirmed
 ABN-Amro, 250 Bishopsgate

27 March 2003
Risk Management in 2003
Gareth Rowland
 ABN-Amro, 250 Bishopsgate

24 April 2003
CRSA & the IT Auditor
John Mitchell
 ABN-Amro, 250 Bishopsgate

22 May 2003
Data Protection - What's coming up & implications for systems (preceeded by AGM)
Stewart Dresner
 ABN-Amro, 250 Bishopsgate

26 June 2003
E-Risk Revisted
Speaker to be confirmed
 ABN-Amro, 250 Bishopsgate

If you wish to attend any of the above meetings, please email Nancy to reserve your place. Please note that the meetings are free to members but a fee of £20 will be charged for non-members.

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