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Canada's Association of Information Technology (IT) Professionals. **"IT Today"**
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Security at top of agenda

It's less dangerous to rob a bank over the Internet, says Charles Wordsworth, principal consultant of Netsafe and Information Systems Professional (I.S.P.).

"You're not going to get shot," he says.

In fact, to electronically rob a bank, the robber doesn't even have to be physically in the same town, country, or even continent.

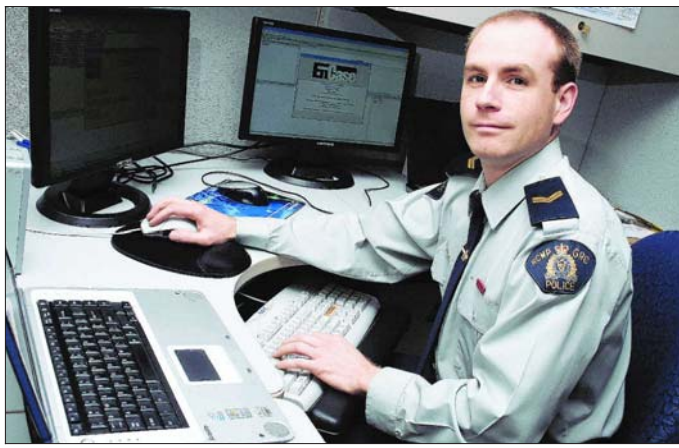
That's one reason why organized crime all over the world is heavily involved in cyber crime. One needn't look farther than the recent experience with TJX in Massachusetts and that's just the tip of a very large iceberg.

"They originally said the intrusion took place from May 2006-January 2007 and then started tracking back to July 2005 and eventually to June 2004," Wordsworth says.

He says early reports estimate that the cost of that one intrusion will cost the company \$1.6 billion with the cost of remediation for its customers coming in at \$1.1 billion.

That single incident shows how important it is for companies to be mindful of security issues. While it is important to have firewalls and anti-virus protection up to date, those problems are relatively minor compared to having corporate data stolen.

Data can be stolen in a number of ways. Laptops are easy targets for thieves. As Cpl. Tim Cooke, of the RCMP in Halifax says, it's easy to download data onto a thumb drive. Then, there is the emerging field of internet extortion where the thieves refuse to



Cpl. Tim Cooke is with the RCMP in Halifax.

release the data they've stolen until dollars change hands. "The good guys are usually a few steps behind," says Dr. Tom Keenan I.S.P., of the University of Calgary. "The bad guys are the ones winning and it's the members of the general public that usually end up paying."

His advice for companies is to take security seriously; whether it's through educating the staff about security measures, beginning with such basics as instructing them never to give out a password over the phone, and moving on from there.

If a crime is committed, that has any association with a computer, officers like Cpl. Cooke are called in to investigate.

"It could be a murder, someone issuing threats, a fraud case, anti-terrorism, child pornography or a crime against a big business," Cooke says. "So, we might be at a crime scene or we might

seize a hard drive and take a snapshot of it. We also have very effective computer programs for recovering data." He, too, advises companies to pay more attention to the security of their computer systems by keeping up to date with technology and instituting security policies in the workplace.

"Technological crime is the wave of the future and while we may have made some slow progress in the beginning, things are starting to happen and more people are realizing how important it is to have a strong line of defence," he says.

Security experts Charles Wordsworth I.S.P., Cpl. Tim Cooke, and Dr. Tom Keenan I.S.P. are speaking at the CIPS INFORMATICS IT conference to be held at the Halifax World Trade and Convention Centre from May 27 to 30, 2007. For more information or to register, visit: www.cipsinformatics.ca or call (toll free) 1-877-ASK-CIPS.

IT professionals to converge in Halifax

An opportunity to meet, share and learn

By Carol Dobson
Special Features Writer

When the 200-plus delegates to the Canadian Information Processing Society's (CIPS) INFORMATICS conference arrive at the World Trade and Convention Centre in Halifax for the first session on May 26, they will be facing a busy agenda built upon three themes.

"We're clustering the speakers," says Paul Rodier, chair of PDit Canada Inc. (a division of CIPS).

The first day's theme will be Managing the Complexity of IT. It will be followed, on Tuesday, by a day devoted to Energizing the IT Professional. The final theme for this year's conference will be The Future of IT.

Each day will start with a keynote speaker followed by breakout workshops, a lunch, also with a keynote speaker, more afternoon sessions and a social time in the evening.

"The conference was designed to enable a good exchange of information, with lots of opportunities for networking," Rodier says. "It's not specifically a technical conference nor is it a management conference."

"It will be a good opportunity for IT professionals to meet their peers from across the country," says Mary Jean Kucerak, the executive director of CIPS. "They can share experiences and meet new contacts that they can call upon in the future. It's also an opportunity to have a lot of fun."

She says many of the speakers make a point of staying around after they deliver their presentations, making it very easy for conference participants to speak one on one with some of the leading experts in the field.

The conference has attracted delegates from Newfoundland and Labrador to British Columbia, from diverse backgrounds.

"It's a great way to get reacquainted with people you might only see once a year, and, in many cases, it's people from the same city," Kucerak says.

"We held our conference here in 1994 and it was a really successful event. The lobster dinner we had was one of the highlights of the conference and we enjoyed the East Coast hospitality."

"The theme of this year's conference is 'Energizing IT Professionals,'" she says. "So I'd like to invite local IT professionals to come to the conference, to energize themselves and their career. It's a great opportunity to meet, share, and learn."

Technology advancing

How Information Technology (IT) fits into the day-to-day operation of a business has changed radically in recent years. It wasn't so long ago that computers filled rooms - now the amount of memory those behemoths contained fits on a chip the size of a thumbnail. Early adopters bought word processors to improve their company's efficiencies, then moved on to desktop computers and eventually onto the web.

"In the early 2000s, companies got into IT for IT's sake," Igor Abramovitch, a director with Robert Half Technology, says. "The industry was growing fast and they wanted to be a part of it. Now it's come down to IT supporting the business and the IT staff have to understand the business in order to support it. You're not going to build a website just to say that you're cool and have a website. The website is there to increase sales, support your customers or to market your company."

As a result, IT is more integrated into the day-to-day operation of a business, which makes soft skills very important for IT professionals.

"Communication skills are very important," he says. "You have to be strong in your verbal and written skills. That includes skills in documenting, testing, and speaking."

"Project management skills are also important," he says. "Some people might find themselves working on numerous projects at once. So you have to know how to manage multiple projects at a time and be skilled at prioritization."

Those who have those skills will find themselves in charge of their destinies as they advance from one position to the next.

John Oxley, the Director of IT Pro Evangelism for Microsoft Canada and a Director at CIPS, Canada's association of IT professionals, firmly believes that there are opportunities for those who want to take charge of their careers.

Right now he sees an industry where there are senior members nearing retirement but who have a lot of knowledge about the different types of systems which have evolved since computing started gaining ground over the past century. He also sees a role for those senior people as mentors to the generation that is coming along.

"These are people who are going to leave a good legacy for the people coming into IT in the future," he adds. "Younger workers are coming into the field with a different way of looking at technology, how to build it, and how to use it."

There's a need for dreamers who think big ideas of where to take technology next. His advice to them - please dream.

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IT employers looking for broad skill set

If you're going fishing for a job in Information Technology (IT) in this country, then it's wise to keep the acronym BAIT in your back pocket.

It's a term that Stephen Ibaraki I.S.P., the vice president of the Canadian Information Processing Society, a national professional IT association, uses to describe the skills that employers are looking for.

B stands for a broad knowledge of both business and technology.

"For example, if you're going to be working in the health care industry, then you need a combination of IT knowledge and knowledge of that industry, the same goes for the fishing industry or the oil industry," Ibaraki says.

'A' stands for 'a good, service oriented attitude. 'I' represents interpersonal skills, while 'T' stands for technology.

"We're predicting a skill shortage as more and more baby boomers approach

retirement," he says. "One in five IT workers will be retiring in the next five to 10 years."

"A recent survey of 100 CIOs asked how long it took them to fill a full time position," Igor Abramovitch, a director with Robert Half Technology, says.

"They responded that it took 48 days to fill a staff position and 74 days to fill a middle management spot. We're seeing that the hiring cycles are longer and it's getting harder to find the right person."

He agrees with Ibaraki that business acumen is one of the criteria employers are looking for. It's not enough just to have IT skills.

"You have to be able to see the big picture and be able to interact not only with the other people in your department but also with other departments and with customers. Employers are looking for more of the soft skills, like project management and customer service."

At a time when baby boomers are on the cusp of retirement, computer science programs at Canadian universities saw enrolments drop over the past number of years, especially after the dot com bombs of the early years of the century even though there are demands for graduates. In some cases, universities experienced up to a 70 per cent decline in enrolments.

"Some industries are going to universities and guaranteeing jobs for graduates," says Dr. Peter Thompson, I.S.P., president of RIS. "In those cases, it's a win-win situation. The university loves to see lots of people enrolling in computer science programs and the students love it because there are lots of jobs."

One solution to the skill shortage, Ibaraki feels, is to start promoting IT as a career option to the generation that is coming along — the kids in middle and



Stephen Ibaraki I.S.P., is vice-president of the Canadian Information Processing Society.

high school. These are the children who have grown up with technology more than any other generation so it will be easy to send them the message to take IT courses in university because there are great careers ahead.

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IT world interconnected

By Carol Dobson
Special Features Writer

Information technology is like a spider web, says John Boufford I.S.P., president of the Canadian Information Processing Society (CIPS).

"When you touch one corner of it, there's an impact felt throughout the web."

No matter the size of a business, or institution, or government department, in today's world, technology is involved. Therefore it's important that the people in charge of the technology have the appropriate professional designations. In the case for Information Technology (IT) workers, that designation is the Information Systems Professional (I.S.P.) designation.

IT professionals who have made the decision to pursue this designation show that they are committed to ensuring best practices in the workplace, that they adhere to a professional code of conduct, and that they are committed to furthering their professional knowledge. Boufford says six provinces have legislation that covers the certification

of IT professionals, including Nova Scotia and that groups are working towards similar legislation in the remaining provinces.

In terms of hiring an IT professional, Paul Kent I.S.P., the CIO of xwave and Senior Vice President of Enterprise Solutions at Bell Aliant, says a potential employee who has the designation or who can demonstrate that they are working towards it would be looked upon favourably.

"If a person shows that they have a membership in a professional organization, then that shows that they have an interest in the profession beyond their job," he says. "But a person shows that they have a membership in a professional organization, then that shows that they have an interest in the profes-



Contributed
John Boufford I.S.P., CIPS President



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Bruce Gorman I.S.P. is President of the Nova Scotia arm of CIPS.

sion beyond their job and if they have the certification, that shows they are an individual who wants to move themselves forward. The I.S.P. [designation] shows that there has also been an independent assessment of this person's capabilities."

"From a Nova Scotia point of view, the IT industry is thriving," Bruce Gorman, an I.S.P. and the president of the Nova Scotia provincial body of CIPS, says. "You just have to look at recent



Contributed
Paul Kent FCIPS, I.S.P., is CIO of xwave and Senior Vice President of Enterprise Solutions at Bell Aliant.

developments like the CareerBeacon supplement, the fact that RIM is hiring a person per day over a five year period, and companies like xwave and quest who are located here."

He cites high tech companies that have come to Nova Scotia because of the quality of the workforce.

"Keane is one example. They don't do any business in this region but they have a thriving company - you can't go to Scotia Square at lunchtime without

seeing their employees running around. They chose this location because of our people and it's their number one location in Canada."

"That's why professionalism in the IT industry is so important and that's also why the I.S.P. designation is important. The more people we have with that designation, the better it is as a selling point to bring companies to this province."

Off-shoring trend coming on-shore?

By Yasmin Jivraj
Contributing Writer

The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) market is conservatively estimated to be in excess of \$250B annually, and growing between 9-13 per cent world-wide. India alone is expected to hit \$48B in 2007 at an astounding 28per cent CAGR. China's BPO market for IT Services alone is greater than \$7B. The processes being outsourced globally are stacked ranked as IT related functions (28per cent), Human Resources (15 per cent), Sales/Marketing Support (14 per cent), and Financial Services (11per cent). With comparatively low costs of living, and a strong cultural focus on education, India and China, along with Brazil and Russia make up the dominant global forces in what's known as the "BRIC" outsource countries.

Under the "old BPO model" in the 90s, off-shoring represented a large workforce supply and lower labor costs. As technology has advanced, so haven't the IT skills and capabilities of the BRIC countries, and the market has seen a dramatic shift where off-shoring now represents significantly increased product development and engineering services.

IDC reports "global sourcing" as the new delivery model and expects the BPO providers to expand to new geographies with a significant increase in the integration of new technologies such as VOIP (voice over IP networks) and SaaS (software as a service). Gartner Research suggests that opportunities exist for North American based solution providers to leverage near-shore resources, and take advantage of a shift in "voice service and application support" transitioning back to NA soil. In a recent study, The Branham Group cited the U.S. market for IT BPO at \$694M, but pegged the Canadian share of this market at a mere 2.2 per cent. Branham goes on to suggest Canada is under performing to its potential and suffers from a lack of awareness or brand as a near shore BPO alternative.

The question for Canadian BPO providers is not "how technical resources can be used to beat or match costs in India" but "how technical resources in Canada can be better used to integrate and be a more formidable component in the global sourcing environment". It's easy to gravitate towards thoughts of "off shoring or global sourcing is bad because it takes jobs away from Canadians" and therefore the response is often "how do we stop this" or how do we "compete against this". In a country rich with IT skilled resources, this should not be our stance. Once we start moving towards how technical resources in Canada can be better used in the global economy, we can then capitalize on this expansion to new geographies.

A case study on "competing with India" could be New Brunswick back in the 90s where the McKenna government was successful in positioning New Brunswick as an alternative to high-tech off shoring. New Brunswick was taken from largely an agrarian economy to a high-tech near-shore economy; and as a result, many companies chose to locate their contact centers there.

Over the past several years, major Indian based firms have set up offices "on-shore" and NA providers should be looking at partnering opportunities where they can bring a high value in understanding regional technology trends and the BPO clients. (e.g. Tata Consultancy Services Limited is an Indian information technology, consulting, services and business-process outsourcing organization and operates across more than 50 countries and has more than 175 offices across the globe.)

The decision to outsource selective services or to fully off-shore (or entertain a combination of both) is a business decision made on a case by case basis that depends on several market and process need factors. In some cases an on-site team is preferred (the need

for technical resources), a partial on-shore model is preferred (the need for Canada technical resources), a full off-shore model is required (the need for global technical resources with Canadian technical resources providing the "front-end") or a hybrid of the above.

The key message is that Canadian BPO providers should not look to fight BRIC region providers, rather look to see how we best integrate in with that environment. Canada based companies need to take advantage of these emerging trends, and not sit by and wait for the market to evolve around them.

The latest trends are global sourcing and Acrodex has embraced it and have been moving towards using the technical resources in Canada in the global economy, not to compete against it but to be part of it. The role of the Canadian

resources is such a mindset is wide and varied and our focus here is on thought leadership, driving our direction, architecture and high level design on-shore while shipping more repetitive activities that fill out that 'vision' to countries better able to perform such a role.

Join Yasmin Jivraj FCIPS, I.S.P., Acrodex President, at the CIPS INFORMATICS IT conference at the Halifax World Trade and Convention Centre on May 29, 2007. Hear about the latest trend in the global-sourcing of IT services and processes; and learn how Acrodex built part of its success on evolving to meet global services needs. For more information on this session and other IT workshops, visit: www.cipsinformatics.ca.

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