



ISACA Avian Flu Planning in IT / FS Market-wide (BC) Exercise

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ISACA – avian flu statistics

- The bird flu type A/H5N1 is able to infect people because it is able to cross the species-barrier. However, it does not do this easily. Those who have become infected have lived or worked in proximity to birds and have had close and prolonged direct contact with infected birds. Since 2003 only 256 people have become infected worldwide, 151 of whom have died. There is no evidence so far that anyone has caught the virus from another human as same families but difficult to say.
- Medical experts are tracking it because they believe that it could turn out to be the source of a flu pandemic. Pandemics have happened - three times in the twentieth century, killing millions of people; and they will happen again because of the nature of the virus.
- As in any other crisis, you will be affected by the problems that beset your customers. In FS, two consequences of a bird flu outbreak might be extra claims on insurance policies and increased levels default on bank loans and other debt. In Retail, particularly food, issues are obvious.
- UK government guidelines suggest that organisations employing large numbers of people should ensure that their plans are capable of handling staff absence rates of up to 15% over the 2-3 week peak of a pandemic (in addition to usual absenteeism levels). However, the figure may be higher.

Important to note that the work you will do on a project of this type is transferable to many different situations.

ISACA – kick-off workshop

- **Aims of the workshop were to:**
 - **assess and prepare for the impact on IS and business services of an Avian Flu incident that could result in short, medium or extended adverse impact.**
 - **identify potential impact of such events – H,M,L.**
 - **outline proposals for mitigating actions.**
- **It was considered that the disruption could adversely impact IS in providing adequate services to the business because of unavailability of resources, skills, facilities or work places.**
- **Avian Flu was considered as affecting staff availability @ -25%, -50%, -75% (Note that actions can be easily widened for any loss of staff).**
- **The intention was not to get all of the answers at the workshop, but to identify & prioritise key, candidate activities that would need to be undertaken, agreed and assigned across the workshop members.**

Let's brainstorm areas for consideration!

- **Following the workshop:**
 - Determine criticality of actions identified
 - Project manage action owners
 - Provide guidance when required e.g. providing templates for various different assessments
 - Challenge deliverables
 - Produce final report

ISACA – project work-stream 1, critical systems

- **Priority: H**
- **Actions:**
 - Review and validate the list of known critical, operational business areas
 - Review and validate the associated list of supporting critical IT systems
 - Review and validate the relative priorities for recovering and supporting critical IT systems
- **Key point:**
 - Basis for the review in order to determine what is supported
- **Tip:**
 - If possible, tie into your organisation's annual BIA process

ISACA – project work-stream 2, support documentation

- **Priority: H**
- **Action:**
 - Review, validate and update as necessary all IS support documentation for critical systems and processes (i.e. could be used by appropriately skilled, competent personnel)
- **Key point:**
 - This is essential if replacement staff are going to pick up unfamiliar roles
- **Tip:**
 - This is a good selling point for the project as procedures should be up to date anyway. Obviously Computer Ops are essential for BAU, but do you need development in this situation? Would you implement a change freeze?

ISACA – project work-stream 3, key activities, skills and resources

Priority: H

Action:

- **Review, summarise and document as a staff matrix the following types of information**
1) key roles or jobs , 2) key staff / key man dependencies, 3) key skills and knowledge, 4) current assessment of skills base, 5) specific or additional training needs, 6) primary, secondary and alternative sources of skills
- **Key point – this turned out to be the most important task in the project. To address this a proforma skills matrix was produced for team managers to complete. The required information was documented under the following headings:**
 - Area – for example Infrastructure Management
 - Key job / role / task – what is the key job, role or task performed?
 - Key skill / knowledge – what is the key skill or knowledge required to perform that job?
 - Supporting documentation – are there appropriate supporting procedures in place for the task?
 - Staff details
 - Organisation – who do the key staff named work for i.e. internal or third party?
 - Alternative / solution – e.g. training, alternative person, support tools etc.
 - Actions required – are any actions required to enable the alternative / solution?
- **Tip – Could use this process to implement a full skills database across IS and reduce reliance on key staff**

ISACA – project work-stream 4, support tools

- **Priority: L**
- **Action:**
 - Confirm the tools and products required by IT personnel to undertake the roles and activities required to provide critical support to key business areas and systems e.g. pre-configured hardware and software, remote access facilities and automation
- **Key point:**
 - This is a general area that could help to reduce reliance on key staff and should be considered by IT functions as a matter of course
- **Tip:**
 - Use the output from work stream 3 to assist with this assessment

ISACA – project work-stream 5, 3rd parties

- **Priority: H**
- **Actions:**
 - Confirm and review 3rd party contingency plans and contractual obligations to the organisation, considering; pandemic illness plans, access to 3rd party sites and / or use of 3rd party services etc.
 - Define a plan of action to open preliminary discussions with trusted suppliers and partner organisations, and determine how they could assist IS during short, medium and long term disruptions
- **Key point:**
 - On this project this was being picked up elsewhere in the business
- **Tip:**
 - If you already question third parties regarding their BC preparedness then it is relatively easy to add questions around this to your existing discussions.

ISACA – project work-stream 6, security

- **Priority: H**
- **Actions:**
 - Review and update procedures and skills necessary to facilitate changes to logical access security to systems, considering the following; revoking access rights, enhancing access rights, speed, confidentiality
 - Confirm the key personnel who will need system administration rights and production system support access
 - Review and confirm the processes and trigger events for assessing and changing different levels of physical security control and security awareness
 - Review, confirm or propose minimum levels of physical security control for key IS locations and facilities
- **Key points:**
 - A template was produced to document, for each key system, the current state of the security administration procedures, including; Who administers the system, procedures in place for the process, actions to be taken to mitigate the dependencies and procedural gaps noted and which systems would need emergency user access to them following an incident
 - A paper based form for emergency access requests to IT systems was produced and a log proforma to track any emergency access given
 - Procedures already existed for security triggers
- **Tip:**
 - You can build audits of premises into your IA plans

ISACA – project work-stream 7, Crisis Response Team

- **Priority: H**
- **Actions:**
 - Define and set-up an IS CRT, including guidelines on team invocation, escalation and priorities
 - Appoint an IS CRT Controller
 - Confirm and summarise the interfaces between the Crisis Management Team (CMT) and the IS CRT
- **Key point:**
 - It emerged that an IS CRT of sorts was already in place as members of IS sat on the CMT. It was simply a case of tying into this

ISACA – project work-stream 8, communication

- **Priority: H**
- **Action:**
 - Define and produce guideline communication plans to be used, including pre-defined staff or press release.
- **Key point:**
 - This was simply a case of speaking with Corporate Communications and confirming that they were covering this action. Therefore no action was required as part of this project.

ISACA – project work-stream 9, people

- **Priority: H**
- **Actions:**
 - Consider, review and define appropriate guidelines, triggers and processes to have an equitable incentivisation mechanism in place for staff e.g. in the instance that overtime is required
 - Ensure good knowledge of applicable HR Policies and Guidelines in the event of pandemic illness
- **Key point:**
 - As with the previous work-stream this was simply a case of speaking with HR and confirming that they were covering this action. Therefore no action was required as part of this project.
- **Tip:**
 - It is really useful to have an HR person in the project team.

ISACA – project work-stream 10, industry forums

- **Priority: L**
- **Actions:**
 - Investigate and maintain awareness of Government, Regulatory and other compliance guidelines for Emergency Situations
 - Contact and liaise with both sector business continuity and contingency forums and the BC Management Team
 - Confirm the guidance given to the business on limiting the spread of a pandemic illness
- **Key point:**
 - It is important to keep on top of industry developments and also to tie into existing forums within the business

ISACA – project work-stream 11, business continuity facilities

- **Priority: H**
- **Actions:**
 - Review and reconfirm full scope of current contracted services, facilities and access to skilled personnel, identifying any additional budget requirements
 - Review, validate and document IS multi-site operational capability i.e. moving the Operations Bridge to a different site
- **Key point:**
 - The first point ties in with the third parties section. For the second point it is important to check what you'd do if couldn't get access to a key IT site

ISACA – project outputs

The key output from the project was report that included:

- **A section for every action area, the objectives of the actions, any decisions made and the outcomes**
- **Up to date Business Impact Analysis**
- **Skills matrices for each key area of IT**
- **An updated ‘third party questionnaire’ including pandemic questions**
- **A completed system security administration matrix**
- **A security emergency access log and emergency access request form**
- **Meeting notes from discussions with all action owners**
- **An outstanding issues log**

ISACA – summary and questions

What we did:

- **Brainstorm areas for consideration at workshop and determine action areas as follows:**
 - Critical systems
 - Support documentation
 - Key activities, skills and resources
 - Support tools
 - 3rd parties
 - Security
 - IS CRT
 - Communication
 - People
 - Industry forums
 - Business Continuity facilities
- **Comfort for Senior Management that prepared!**

QUESTIONS?

ISACA – FS market-wide (BC) exercise, background

- **Held on 28th November 2005**
- **Objectives included:**
 - To practise coordination of responses to sector-wide disruption between key participants in the financial sector
 - To enhance the understanding of and confidence in the role of the Tripartite in a major operational disruption
 - To provide value and relevance for every participant
 - To identify areas for improvement in procedures
 - To lay successful foundations for further exercises
- **The methods of delivery of the Exercise included news broadcasts and a series of simulated websites**
- **Over 70 organisations across the UK and over 1,000 people. Including financial companies, stock exchange, CHAPS and the Tripartite (FSA, Bank of England and Treasury)**
- **I and a colleague facilitated the Birmingham test**
- **KPMG has just run the Singapore test**

ISACA – FS market-wide (BC) exercise, findings

- Significantly, despite the scale of events played out in the scenario, Tripartite Authorities concluded that “the situation was controlled and Markets were operational”. Suggests UK financial sector is well prepared to deal with major operational disruption
- The exercise clearly demonstrated three core capabilities:
 - Ability of the Tripartite Authorities to assess, co-ordinate and communicate across the markets and with individual organisations
 - Effectiveness of individual organisations’ plans and the ability of many key organisations to quickly transfer some critical activities elsewhere
 - Robustness and thoroughness of the preparations by the UK civil authorities

Key lessons learnt:

- More work is needed to identify ‘supply chain’ interdependencies
- There are too many false assumptions, particularly around civil authority actions and people-related impacts
- Think ahead – don’t just focus on the immediate issues – how might this unfold? What if? What about tomorrow?

QUESTIONS?

ISACA – contact details

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