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Creative alternatives to reduce corruption in IT

In this article we focus on some options to change traditional anti-corruption thinking in information technology (IT). Manifestations of corruption have changed much since IT, trade and globalisation have excelled during the 1990's. Trade is driving globalisation and technology is making trade and business possible in ways that have never been thought before. IT based manifestations of corruption are evolving and mutating at breath taking speed and are making new opportunities of corruption possible. Examples are fake news, the manipulation of information and misinformation, which played a major role in the United Kingdom's (UK) decision to exit the European Union. In the United States of America (USA), IT has been instrumental in manipulating voters to secure a victory for the current President of America, Donald Trump.

People in control of data, information and the media are some of the most influential in the world. Those in control of information and data such as network providers and data distributor companies are in control of not only the levers of power, but also money and the flow of money to offshore tax havens such as Panama, the Cayman Islands and Comoros. Those that have access to data, the mining and manipulation of data, for example Facebook and Google, are the ones that use algorithms to develop customer profiles, anticipate what customers will be interested in and send them selective information to ensure that they stay "hooked" on using specific software, applications and ser-

vices. Data is being sold for billions to retailers to execute data mining while customers have almost no influence in preventing it. Data companies anticipate future services to customers and customers even "pay" companies indirectly for providing such services. Facebook, for example may use personal information and manipulate it to the service providers' advantage. This situation as described is conflict of interest, abuse of power and exploitation - which are all manifestations of corruption. Facebook paid various penalties amounting to billions of dollars. However, the magnitude of the penalty is minute compared to the benefit of continuing to exploit customers. Such exploitation will never halt. It is just too lucrative for those manipulating information compared to the meagre penalties they pay.

HACKERS

Companies and governments can consider employing hackers in order to improve the security of their firewalls.

Hackers have much more appropriate competencies to prevent virus and IT attacks compared to formally qualified information and technology experts with degrees and PhDs working for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the USA. If Julian Assange could have been so successful in revealing military information about the Iraq war and assisting Chelsea Manning in accessing information about the CIA, then hackers like him can be used successfully to monitor the security of banking customers



Johan Coetzee

and develop new ways to test and crack firewalls and access classified information for the benefit of protecting customers. For example, in securing the security of money and the transfer of money. While he was in the Embassy of Ecuador, Assange has accessed information of the Embassy without the Embassy even being aware of it. If companies are serious about protecting customers, for example banks, they can spend money in employing converted crackers and hackers to protect their customers from losing billions in dubious ways.

Alternatives can be applied to protect customers and to secure data and information. No system in IT is fool-proof and no insurance cover all conditions.

References

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jcoetzee@nust.na