



Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Information Technology International

Newsletter



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TAGITI Successfully Completes SOC2 Project in Jordan



AMMAN – Talal Abu Ghazaleh Information Technology International (TAGITI) has successfully completed the implementation of the System and Organization Controls 2 (SOC2) standard for a well-known service provider in Jordan.

SOC2 is an IT assurance standard issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) used to provide an independent attestation report which covers the service providers IT environment, going beyond just financial reporting.

Mr. Berj Vartenian, IT Consulting Manager in Amman said “More and more companies are outsourcing their services to third parties. As a result, they are exposing their organizations to a new risk vector, namely, the service organization they are outsourcing to. Such third party service providers should be able to provide independent assurance that their IT environment is well controlled, which is what SOC2 provides. We have built capacity in this area and successfully

completed of our first SOC2 project in Jordan.”

The SOC2 report provides detailed information and assurance about the controls at the service provider’s organization relevant to security, availability, and processing integrity of the systems that the service provider uses to process users’ data, as well as the confidentiality and privacy of the information processed by these systems.

These reports can play an important role in:

- Oversight of the organization’s IT environment
- Vendor management programs
- Internal corporate governance and risk management processes
- Regulatory oversight

Being an independent IT consulting firm, Talal Abu Ghazaleh Information Technology International is now offering companies SOC2 compliance, to provide assurance that the IT operational environment within the service providers is in line with the issued standard.

ASREN Joins the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) as an Academia Member

AMMAN - Under the support and guidance of HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman of the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN), ASREN joined the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) as an Academia Member.

The main reason for joining ITU is for ASREN to become an active member of this very important community and to collaborate with ITU on the development of the Pan Arab Research and Education Network and e-Infrastructures. Joining ITU was the result of close coordinated efforts with the ITU Regional Office in Cairo and other regional and international organizations relating to overcoming the challenges and obstacles in the telecom sector in the Arab region.

ASREN recently began preparations for the ArabConnect Initiative which aims at establishing and developing dedicated research and education networks e-Infrastructures and services in the Arab region at both national and regional levels. This ArabConnect will in turn interconnect these national and regional networks to the international and global research and education networks which will enable research and education communities in the Arab Region to communicate and collaborate with other communities around the world.



“We are confident that our partnership with ITU will be very instrumental in implementing the ArabConnect Initiative by supporting and adopting this initiative and by overcoming the telecom regulatory and pricing challenges in the region”, said HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman of ASREN

“We value your membership. It is an expression of your commitment to the development of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector for the benefit of world citizens, without exclusion”, said Brahima Sanou, Director Telecommunication Development Bureau at ITU.

Where IT Dollars Are Being Spent Now

Investment in data technology continues its steady climb at enterprises throughout the world, although this does not necessarily represent the rapid integration of next-generation capabilities into IT environments. Rather, it seems to indicate that organizations are expanding on what they know rather than venturing into an uncertain future.

According to Gartner, global IT spending will hit \$3.7 trillion in 2018, a 4.3 percent increase over the current estimate for 2017. This growth is being led by software, which is on pace to surge 8.5 percent this year, followed by 9.4 percent in 2018. Meanwhile, areas like IT and communications services are showing strong gains as well, as is the device segment, which has been somewhat of a laggard over the past two years. Going forward, Gartner says key technology segments like IaaS, iPaaS and cPaaS will see increasing demand, along with items related to the digital workplace, such as workstream collaboration, workforce analytics and video messaging.

If you want to see what the enterprise is investing in now, don't bother with today's hyped technologies, says ZDnet's Mark Samuels. Instead, look back a few years and see what was being hyped at that time. At the beginning of the decade, the buzz was around Big Data and the cloud while the enterprise was only just starting to figure out basic virtualization. Now that digital transformation is under way, Big Data and the cloud are hitting mainstream adoption while technologies like artificial



intelligence and virtual reality are just starting to gain notice. The rule of thumb is that the IT technology marketplace is always several years ahead of the CIO's operational reality.

This can be seen most clearly in the data center equipment market. Synergy Research issued a report last month that showed a dramatic drop in traditional systems – 18 percent over the past two years – even as both public and private cloud solutions saw double-digit gains. As enterprises find it easier to implement advanced data environments in the cloud, reliance on legacy infrastructure is likely to diminish. And in a somewhat ironic twist, this will likely speed up the lag between a technology's hype period and its entry into the mainstream because cloud providers have a greater incentive than internal IT shops to deploy cutting-edge capabilities and make them readily available for their clients.

Going forward then, it appears that the enterprise's perennial struggle to deploy

the right technology will diminish but will be replaced by more strategic concerns regarding deploying the right set of services for a given business objective. Ascension IT CEO Dimuth Samaranayaka notes that this leads to a number of challenges when devising a working hybrid cloud strategy, not the least of which are determining where to send legacy applications and how to maintain them, as well as what to do with the increased data loads that this highly efficient infrastructure will produce. A key factor in making this determination will be cost, but as many organizations are finding out, the public cloud is not always the least expensive option.

With each new generation of cutting-edge technology, there comes a period where

images of new paradigms and vastly superior ways of accomplishing tasks take hold in the public consciousness. But the reality is that change is hard, and radical change is even harder.

Those who want to sell new technology always try to foster a vision of what could be tomorrow, but those who buy it simply want to solve the problems of today – at least, if they’re smart. So while enterprise IT makes its inexorable way into the future, it helps to realize that it continues to build on the past.

Source:

<https://www.itbusinessedge.com/blogs/infrastructure/where-it-dollars-are-being-spent-now.html>

Digital transforms higher education business models

Higher education Chief Information Officers (CIO) recognise that key organisational priorities are enrolment and student success, but fail to show innovation with regard to the top technologies required to differentiate themselves and win, according Gartner.

In a study by the analyst firm, which quizzed 247 higher education CIOs, a majority of respondents (59%) said there will be significant business model change due to digital transformation.

The CIOs ranked digital business and digital transformation as the fifth most strategic business priority. However, when it comes to the top technology areas their institutions are actually investing in to differentiate themselves, digitalisation and digital marketing ranked only eighth.



This may be because higher education is among the least digitised industries,” said Jan-Martin Lowendahl, vice president and distinguished analyst at Gartner. “The average higher education institution has a large backlog of digital enablement before it can even think about digital transformation.”

Nevertheless, CIOs in the sector need to start bridging the digital divide.

“Considering that higher education is, in principle, an ‘information’ industry with huge digital potential compared to other industries, digitalisation needs to become a top priority,” Lowendahl said.

A third of respondents cited enrolment as their top business priority, making it the clear leader. The growing need to ensure academic quality by competing for the best and the brightest explains the second business priority, student success (22%).

Enrolment and student success are both related to growth and market share, but only 14% of the respondents explicitly mention this as a top business objective, putting it in joint third place, alongside retention.

When asked which technology area is most important to differentiating and winning, analytics was mentioned most, among 23% of CIOs. That ERP was the second most mentioned (15%) is more surprising, as higher education institutions, in general, have not had a good track record in using ERP to re-engineer their operations and decision-making. They “pave the cow paths”, in the words of one CIO, resulting in costly customisation and little improvement.

Third-ranked CRM clearly supports enrolment and retention business objectives while fourth-ranked learning management systems (LMS) is similarly aligned with business priorities such as student experience and success.

Among higher education CIOs’ top areas for new spending, cyber security ranks first with 18%, closely followed by ERP (16%) and a cluster of other priorities that don’t mirror the higher education priorities above.

Investment in cloud continues to be high as several core systems are modernised, including ERP, e-learning/LMS and student information systems (SIS). This shows that higher education institutions are far from finished investing in their learning environment and modernising their core production systems.

Digitalisation and digital marketing doesn’t appear at all on the top new spending list for higher education CIOs, despite “digital” being fifth in top business priorities.

Source:
[http://www.information-age.com/
changing-face-insurance-industry-digital-
transformation-123469299/](http://www.information-age.com/changing-face-insurance-industry-digital-transformation-123469299/)

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