

Assuring Your Information—How Much Should You Spend?

Use INFORM to help determine your optimal investment

Under-investment in information assurance makes you vulnerable and puts critical business assets at risk. However, spending too much on unnecessary products or features will waste resources.

Take the first step in defining your optimal investment by answering these questions:

- *What is the financial impact if my brand value, information, or systems are seriously compromised?*
- *How exposed am I to threats and vulnerabilities?*
- *How effective am I at reducing risks?*
- *Which solutions would further reduce my risk?*
- *How much would these solutions cost me—and is it worth it?*

Symantec now offers an assessment and planning tool called Information Assurance Risk Model (INFORM) to help enterprises establish cost-effective information assurance. INFORM is a Web-based application that can evaluate whether or not investing in an information assurance program is justified by showing the extent to which it will reduce risk exposure compared with its annualized cost. INFORM also lets your organization benchmark against the ISO 17799 standard. It enables you to compare internal business units and to compare aspects of your information assurance program against peers in the industry.

Information Security and Information Assurance

What do we mean by “information assurance?” All businesses depend on the information they create and use, but securing that information is no longer enough. Security alone doesn’t make the right information available when and where it’s needed—which is vital now that we rely on networked systems. Today we must think about information assurance as well as security. Assurance implies information systems that not only protect the information they handle but also operate as they need to, when they need to, under the control of legitimate users. INFORM gives you an accurate picture of your current information assurance management vulnerabilities and the associated costs.

Information Assurance and Risk Management

Managing risks to information assurance across an enterprise is difficult. Typically tactical, operational, and strategic risks are dealt with separately by the IT and risk-planning departments. However, information is critical to the whole enterprise, so it is essential that information assurance management not be divided between these “silos.” Indeed, corporate governance drivers, such as Basel II and Sarbanes-Oxley, are motivating businesses to recognize the importance of communication among all departments. In an effort to improve information assurance and inter-departmental communication, it is easy to overspend or choose the wrong solution, and it can be challenging to demonstrate the return on investment for such an elusive objective as “minimizing risk.” INFORM captures business risk and assigns a monetary value to it, providing real data for decision support.

A Coordinated Action Plan

Ideally your company wants to see links between spending and reductions in risk exposure. Using ISO 17799 as a benchmark for information assurance effectiveness is a powerful measurement method. INFORM benchmarks current information assurance effectiveness against ISO 17799 to focus on areas for improvement, and creates a prioritized action plan to achieve targeted improvements and optimize spending. Using INFORM you can benchmark information assurance management between groups and locations, track trends, and monitor improvements over time.

How INFORM Works

INFORM gives your enterprise the power to explore the effectiveness of current and planned information assurance programs in a structured, repeatable way. To do this, INFORM has five modules providing the following:

1. Assessment of assets at risk, and valuation of these in monetary terms
2. Assessment of potential impact of information assurance on assets at risk, and of annual probability
3. Measurement of current information assurance effectiveness benchmarked against ISO 17799 and assessment of desired target effectiveness
4. Assessment of current implementation of information assurance solutions and a selection of improvements to reach targeted level of effectiveness
5. Comparative scenarios showing the effect on cost and risk reduction of different risk assessments, ISO control targets, or solution selection

INFORM allows rapid production of reports on preliminary scenarios, showing risk reductions for a chosen investment

in information assurance. This may be used as the foundation of a business case, or may be taken as the basis for more extensive investigations.

What INFORM Can Do For You

- Benchmark your current information assurance management against ISO 17799
- Assess your business risk and what it is costing you
- Compare your situation to your peers
- Offer solution options with costs
- Create prioritized action plans

To request further information on INFORM contact:

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About Symantec

Symantec is a global leader in infrastructure software, enabling businesses and consumers to have confidence in a connected world. The company helps customers protect their infrastructure, information, and interactions by delivering software and services that address risks to security, availability, compliance, and performance. Headquartered in Cupertino, Calif., Symantec has operations in 40 countries. More information is available at www.symantec.com.

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