

Jan - Feb 2007

“ a bi-monthly newsletter for the members of the UAE chapter of ISACA”

ISACA UAE Chapter

Members of Chapter Board – 2007

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President's Message

Dear Members,

Greetings to all members from the new Board!

Last year, when I addressed you after taking over the reins from the former president, I had promised you a year with intense activities addressing the wide spectrum of preferences of our members. Now while I am leading the chapter activities for the second year, I am happy to look back at the past year with a sense of achievement.

The support and guidance that we received from all of you as members of the chapter enabled us to think big and achieve major breakthroughs for the chapter last year.

The IT Governance forum aimed at spreading the awareness of ISACA and the CISA & CISM certifications was an astounding success last year.

The chapter's association with HAWKAMAH, the corporate governance institute has enabled us to make our presence felt among the decision makers influencing the government policies.

Our chapter completed a memorable decade of excellence and we celebrated this occasion with pomp and splendour a few months back. I feel myself fortunate and privileged to be at the helm of the chapter in this 10th anniversary year.

Now we are looking forward to a period of more hectic calendar of activities. As many of you may have already realized, the chapter activities has gathered more momentum this year with a wide range of events conducted for the members.

We will be conducting the Second IT Governance Forum (IGF) this year by the end of May. The theme of this forum will be on Organizational Alignment and Value delivery of Information Technology. The underlying objective of IGF is to spread the message of IT Governance and ISACA activities to non-ISACA members.

Besides other exciting events, we plan for a mega regional conference to be scheduled for the end of this year. I look forward for your continuous support and participation in all the activities of your chapter.

As you are aware, a new Board has been constituted for the chapter during the last AGM. We have special positions added to the Board like Web Master and Director for Academic & Government relations this year. I invite each one of you to come forward with your suggestions on improving the activities of the chapter. Together, let us make this year the best in the history of ISACA UAE Chapter.

My best wishes and regards to all.

Saji P. Oommen

President

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Annual General Meeting

The 9th AGM of ISACA UAE Chapter was conducted at the Dhow Palace hotel on 3rd February 2007 from 7 PM to 10 PM.

The proceedings began with welcome address by Nalin, the Vice President of the Chapter. The Chapter President – Saji, presented the detailed Annual report. A new 15 member Board was elected to steer the initiatives of the chapter for the year 2007.

As a mark of appreciation from the chapter, faculty for the CISA review classes were felicitated. The Emirates Award for the CISA & CISM exam toppers was presented by Mr. Amer Kazim, Senior Vice President – Finance, Emirates Airlines. Saji, in his Presidential address outlined the vision and priorities for the chapter.

The audience was treated to an excellent presentation by Mr. Suresh Kumar, Chief Executive Officer, Emirates Financial Services on "IT Governance and Quality".

The vote of thanks from the Secretary was followed by a sumptuous dinner – a fitting finale to the grand evening !!



Saji Oommen – Leading the chapter successfully into 2007

CISA /CISM News

ISACA UAE Chapter congratulates all those cleared the CISA & CISM exams of Dec 2006

Preparations for June 2007 Exam

The CISA Review classes would be held in Dubai & Abu Dhabi starting April 12th. Review classes for the CISM exam would also be conducted by the Chapter.

Interested candidates may please contact the chapter representatives and register at the earliest. As always, the seats are limited.

For further details contact Abdulla Bin Ahmed at certification@isacauae.org or visit our website www.isacauae.org.

CISA and CISM Scoring Change

The CISA and CISM certification boards recently approved changing the way exams are scored. To alleviate confusion found with the previous scoring method and to provide greater clarity, ISACA will use a 200-800 point scale with a passing point of 450 beginning with the June 2007 exams. Using a 200-800 scale will increase the range of scores and eliminate the perception that the score is a percentage. This scoring method is used by several testing organizations, including the well-respected SAT and GRE exams

CISA /CISM Review Classes gets rave reviews.

".....am pleased to inform you and all other members that I just received my Dec 2006 CISA exam results and have passed the examination. I wish to thank you for guiding us in the best possible ways during the CISA Review Courses. I would also like to thank all the other members who conducted the CISA Review classes. All the best!

Thanks and Regards,
Kavitha Ramesh "

"....Special thanks to Bharat Raigangar, Sandeep, Chandran, Kuber, to have made the review session happen, and help us tune our attitude towards understanding CISM way of security, thus helped me score an 83. I wish all better success in life... see you at agm and good luck
... .. Sai Nambiar "

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CPE Meetings during the period

1. Implementation of Control Self-Assessment by Dr. Albert J. Marcella, CISA Dubai – 13th February 2007.

His session highlighted how Control self-assessment (CSA) can be used effectively as a methodology by managers and control professionals to assess the adequacy of an organization's risk management and control processes.

2. Maximising Value from IT Investments - A Benefits Realisation Approach using VAL IT"

by Mr. Anil Jogani &

How does COBIT compare with other global standards like ISO 9000, ISO 27001, ISO 20000?" by Mr. Avinash Kadam, ISACA International Vice President

Dubai – 25th February

These two sessions conducted in the same evening discussed on how Val It work and how it helps organizations realize optimal value from IT-enabled investments. The session also compared COBIT with other international standards and frameworks that have evolved internationally.

Other events conducted in association other partners during the period

1. Operational risk Management workshop on Feb 20th in association with Emitac & Paladion.
2. Implementing ISMS by Avinash Kadam on Feb 25th in association with IMTAC.

News Bytes

CISA and CISM Certification Renewals

This is a reminder to members who have not already renewed their membership to renew and report CPE hours as soon as possible to avoid revocation.

For your reference the CPE policy is available at www.isaca.org/cisacpepolicy or www.isaca.org/cismcpepolicy.

The renewal process can be completed online by logging into www.isaca.org and going to My Renewals.

Note:- Members who do not renew their membership may be flagged as expired members by the HQ and may not receive member benefits

New Membership Benefit from ISACA

Listservs or Discussion Forums:

ISACA and ITGI have established several listservs to enable interested parties to find the group most suited to their professional interests. Each of the six listservs offers excellent opportunities to share advice, seek assistance and raise pertinent questions.

Available at www.isaca.org/listser

From The Editor.....

This is the first newsletter since the New Chapter Board has taken over. As you all know there were a few changes in the Board this year. I took over from Sandeep Godbole as the Newsletter Editor. As the Board understands that the publishing of Newsletter is a very important activity for the chapter, Mr. Roshan Hamid is joining me as the Joint Newsletter Editor.

Our ambitious target this year is to publish 6 Newsletters. I am sure that with the support and guidance of our members we will be able to achieve this target. Not only the numbers, but also the quality of these newsletters can be improved if and only if all our members contribute to the same.

On a final note, let me thank all our members for the tremendous support you have been extending to all the ISACA events last year.

Biju Nair

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Chapter Activity Report – 2006

Well Begun is Half Done – The year starts in a high note

We started the year with our 8th Annual General Meeting in which the new Board under the new President took charge. The Annual General meeting not only provided the usual platform for networking for the ISACA Members but also provided opportunity for our members to listen to two very interesting topics. The first one was on "IT as a Business Driver" by Mr. Hari Padmanabhan, President & MD – 3i-Infotech. This was followed by another crowd pulling talk on "IT Governance and Quality" by Mr. Abdul Qader Ali, Director QA & Internal Audit DPA

Chapter Activities gather momentum

The good start to the year gathered more steam in February with two topics very close to the hearts of ISACA members being discussed. Using COBIT as best practices benchmark for IT Assurance in Dubai & Practical approach to using COBIT 4.0 in Abu Dhabi. Both sessions were conducted by Mr. Rafiq, who has been an evangelist in COBIT over the years.

In addressing the requirements of members to discuss and understand new risks, Challenges and opportunities we had a CPE session in March on Fraud Risk Management by David Cafferty who is an expert in this area. Another session in April with the same intentions was on security audits through Penetration Testing and Computer Forensics capabilities by Ms. Sangeetha Thomas who was the regional director for EC-Council EMEA.

Mid Year Bonanza

The support and guidance extended by our members prompted the chapter to think big and conduct a 2 day workshop on IT Risk Management. This 2 day event (May 3rd & 4th) contained 4 sessions ranging from Forensics to Scorecard approach to risk management. This attracted participation of professionals from different walks of Technology Risk Management. The sessions were,

1. Fundamental Forensics for Auditors and Info Security Professionals by Albert J. Marcella

2. Aligning COBIT, ITIL and ISO 17799 - Practical approach by Rafiq

3. Emerging methodologies and standards for measuring and assessing IT risks by Rama Subramaniam

4. Using Scorecards & Risk Indicators for Mapping IT Risks by Peter Egginton.

IT Governance Forum – the gathering of decision makers in Technology

In line with ISACA's goals of addressing Technology Risk Management & IT Governance initiatives, we had an evening gathering of IT Governance Professionals on 03rd May 2006. This event was attended by the decision makers from various industries and addressed by Dr. Nasser Saidi, the Executive Director of Hawkamah, the Institute for Corporate Governance.

ISACA UAE Chapter forefronts the IT Governance initiatives in UAE

July witnessed a very important milestone as far as ISACA UAE Chapter was concerned. On 30th July the chapter signed a MOU with HAWKAMAH which is an autonomous, regional entity whose mission is to

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assist countries and companies of the wider MENA region in developing sound and globally well integrated corporate governance frameworks and practices. The major objectives of this partnership are,

- a) Improving the IT governance practices of private and public sector entities within the UAE, including listed companies, banks and financial institutions
- b) Help develop IT related governance frameworks for entities within the UAE in accord with international best practices for the public and the private sectors.

This association has given ISACA the leadership role in the area of IT Governance in the region which was evident from the fact that the chapter was invited to host and facilitate a 2 hour session on IT Governance in the two day regional Corporate Governance conference conducted by Hawkamah. The team led by former presidents Vatsaraman, Ramachandran and the current president Saji Oommen was able to present the relevance and need of good IT Governance to the august audience of the conference.

CPE Meetings continues to attract members..

The CPE meetings continued through the months of May to July through the following events

- A practical demo and Presentation on "Growing Pains of a Hacker" by David Michaux
- Continuous Process Improvement – The Heart of IT Governance by Tariq Y. Elsadik
- Discussion on Cyber Law by Omar Obeidat in association with DQG.

- "How to Audit Wireless Networks" , a presentation by the President of ISACA Perth Chapter, Gary Langham

Second Half of 2006 – Increased momentum and increased participation

We continued with our initiatives with increased momentum in the second half of the year as well. August saw the talk on "Emerging Standards and Opportunities for CISA/CISM" by M.N. Sudershan followed by "ISO 27001 and How IPS maps into the 27001 controls" by Dimitris Petropoulos & Arun George in Abu Dhabi. We also had a very interesting and emerging topic on "CMMI - Moving towards High Process Maturity", presented by Rajiv Lalwani & Rajesh Balakrishnan of KPMG in September.

Break from Tradition – ISACA looks into personal health and lifestyle

In October we decided to take a break from the tradition and look internally at one's self with this interesting topic "Engineering Lifestyles viz-a-viz Organizational Governance" by Dr. Rajan Sadanandam- CEO Dubai Heart Centre - Perhaps the first time a Medical Doctor was presenting on our ISACA Meeting.

More Practical and hands on sessions

Based on the continuous requests from members for hands on sessions, we conducted a one-day workshop in November on "Introduction to data Analysis using ACL." By Gretel De Paepe, who is a Professional ACL Trainer. This was done in Etisalat Academy using the excellent facilities provided by them.

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We also had a talk on "BASEL II accord implementation in the GCC region with special focus on Operational Risk management" by Dr. Sandeep Srivastava, KPMG in November.

The year was rounded off in grand style with a very exciting session by none other than Mr. Erik Guldentops. about IT Value Management and Cobit 4.1.

In addition to the association with the corporate governance institute HAWKAMAH, ISACA was engaged with similar like minded organisations sharing the same vision and mission on various initiatives - Dubai Ethics Resource Centre (DERC), Dubai Quality Group (DQG) and ACFE to name a few.

CISA & CISM Certification Continues to attract masses

From 2005 onwards ISACA has been offering 2 CISA & CISM exams per year. This has added the opportunities for the members to get the Certification faster. But at the same time it requires additional efforts from the ISACA Chapter to conduct the Review classes twice a year. This was ably done last year and was continued by the help of our reputed faculty members this year as well. For the first time this year we started the CISM review classes also for the December exam. All the classes in Dubai as well as in Abu Dhabi were well attended and appreciated.

Newsletter gets facelift & establishes as a medium of communication

The year 2006 was a year of hyper activity for the chapter. This will be

more evident while going through the 4 newsletters that were published in the year. These newsletters not only kept our members updated about the happenings in the Chapter activities but also discussed various relevant topics, thereby acting as guidance for the practicing professionals.

The 10th Anniversary celebrations

The celebration of 10th Anniversary of the chapter formation came as icing in the cake for the chapter activities for the year. The chapter celebrated this occasion with a one-day workshop on Information Security titled "Building a Secure Globe". The speaker for the day was none other than Mr. Ankit Fadia who had established a name for himself as a child prodigy in Information Security.

The evening gathering of chapter members at Park Hyatt was treated to a walk down memory lanes by the gathering of all former chapter presidents. Hameed Kasim, Chief Executive HK consulting and the man behind several momentous initiatives in Dubai, addressed the gathering. The rhythmic beats and foot-tapping numbers that followed the meeting showed that our chapter members are not only in the forefront on audit and risk management but they are equally equipped with other talents.

This was an evening to remember for all those who participated and the response from our chapter members was unprecedented.

The year came to a close with promises of a brighter, busier and more enthralling 2007.