



# Information Systems Audit and Control Association

Baton Rouge Chapter

July 2001

## President's Letter

When I attended the 2000 ISACA Leadership Conference, I was "invited" to the lunch for "small and probationary" chapters. I sat with Presidents of other chapters who were considering disbanding their chapters due to a lack of participation. Consequently, when I attended the Leadership Conference this past March with Kenny Reynolds (incoming Chapter Vice President) -- I'll be honest -- I had a bit of an inferiority complex. I had my small chapter excuses ready:

*"Located in the state capital of a poor southern state, we're a poor chapter that has a large contingent of cash-poor students and state workers who are not reimbursed for their ISACA dues and lunches. We don't have the resources to put on the type of programs that the other chapters are having. We are lucky to get 25 of our 40 members to attend our meetings. In order to maintain viability, we've had to share programs with other organizations such as the AITP and the IIA."*

### **I didn't need any of these excuses.**

Rather than answering questions about our Chapter's viability, I was questioned by other chapter leaders about how we are able to attract so many members to chapter meetings. (Our attendance rates were significantly higher than those cited by other chapters (10-25%).) Kenny and I were continually questioned about how we were able to establish relationships with local educational institutions. (Having professors of local universities serve as chapter leaders really helps!) All chapters were encouraged to reach out to other organizations to sponsor joint meetings, something that we were already doing. At the Conference's conclusion, our "small, probationary" chapter was given an award for the best newsletter for chapters in our size classification. We left the meeting realizing that we were members of one of ISACA's most innovative and successful chapters.

Credit for the Chapter's past success belongs to Jill Joseph, our outgoing President. At the ISACA Leadership meeting, I found out that the reason for

## Upcoming Chapter Meeting

Topic: *e-Business Risks and Best Practices*  
Speaker: Paula Scarton  
Director of Information Systems Audit  
Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Louisiana  
Date: **Tuesday, July 17th**  
Time: 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
CPE: 1 hour  
Location: Ralph and Kacoo's (Bluebonnet, across from Mall of Louisiana)  
Cost: \$18 for members, \$22 for nonmembers  
RSVP: Tim Louwers, [louw@lsu.edu](mailto:louw@lsu.edu)  
**by 12:00 noon on Friday, July 13<sup>th</sup>.**  
Menu: Sensation Salad;  
Crawfish Combination **or**  
Mahi-Mahi **or**  
Chicken Meunière;  
Hushpuppies;  
Cheesecake;  
Tea or Coffee.

our probationary status was the fact that Jill has been President for the past 3 years. While lack of leadership turnover is typically a "red flag" for most chapters, Jill's continued leadership has been a real strength for our chapter. We now realize that despite her diminutive size, Jill's shoes will be pretty hard to fill!

To meet this challenge, we need your support for the ambitious goals the Chapter Board has set for the upcoming year. Plan to bring a prospective member to our next meeting (late August). **The chapter will pick up the prospective member's lunch.** Please set aside time for a full day of CPE in the spring. Most importantly, we ask that you continue to regularly attend Chapter meetings. I look forward to seeing everyone on July 17<sup>th</sup> at Ralph and Kacoo's!

*Tim Louwers*

## Cures for what BUGS You

Whenever you (and other employees) navigate the internet, the same web servers that download content also collect information about you. Many times, this information is collected surreptitiously. You may already know about *cookies*, the user data your browser saves on your hard drive that's accessible to the web servers whose sites you visit.

**BUT**...your browser doesn't normally block *web bugs*. A web bug is a piece of code attached to an image on a web page. Often, the image is a single pixel on the page. Because the human eye can't distinguish an image that small, we cannot detect a potential web bug on a page. The code attachment is usually used for the same purpose as cookies: to gather data about those who visit the web site, including IP addresses, browsers and plug-ins used, and email addresses. A web bug on a page with a form may relay any information you enter on the form to another (third party) server without your knowledge.

Even though cookies and web bugs may seem harmless, there are costs to enabling information gathering. Each time employees navigate the web, they are leaving company footprints evidence that can be easily traced back to the company. (Some companies regularly track how often competitors visit their web sites!) Also, marketing firms use such information to target potential customers through the use of customized banner ads and email solicitations. How much "spam" do you want employees to receive at work?

### TO THE RESCUE: DETECTIVE/CORRECTIVE CONTROL

Bugnosis™ is a **free** Internet Explorer 5+ plug-in developed by the Privacy Foundation. Once installed on your computer, Bugnosis checks each downloaded web page for web bugs, and alerts you to their presence in a small window at the bottom of the browser's screen. Bugnosis analyzes the bug, showing you the code attached to the image and telling you of its attributes. Unfortunately, you must first download the web page and the attached bug before Bugnosis alerts you. However, once alerted, you can select which web pages you no longer wish to navigate because of the bugs.

For examples of web bugs "in the wild", see these URLs (viewable with Bugnosis or by viewing the web page's source code):

(1) A Washington Post online article about web bugs, that itself has 2 bugs embedded in the page!

<http://washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A6818-2001Mar14.html>

(2) Louisiana State University's homepage!

<http://www.lsu.edu>

### SNIPPING ADS AND COOKIES, INCLUDING ADVERTISING-RELATED WEB BUGS: PREVENTIVE CONTROL

Most browsers let you disable certain or all cookies within the Preference menu settings. Some sites, however, such as the Wall Street Journal online, use cookie files as part of their login procedures. Disable cookies, and you can't use these sites. Fortunately, a few software solutions will let you choose which cookie files to refuse. These plug-ins block online banner ads, pop-up windows (hurray!), and associated cookies. Each product acts as a virtual proxy server to your browser, preventing the offending files and images from downloading to your computer. These products not only help you to maintain privacy, but also speed up web navigation: your computer no longer contacts external servers to download the web ads.

The most popular ad-blocking solutions are:

AdKiller© (shareware)

<http://www.adkiller.com>

AdSubtract™ (freeware)

<http://www.adsubtract.com>

Guidescope™ (freeware, in beta testing phase)

<http://www.guidescope.com>

Internet Junkbuster Proxy™ (freeware for you open-source fans)

<http://www.junkbusters.com>

WebWasher® (free for personal or educational use; shareware for corporate use)

<http://www.webwasher.com>

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