

COMPUTER PROFESSIONALS (REGISTRATION COUNCIL OF NIGERIA)

2012 ANNUAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS’ ASSEMBLY

Thursday 7th of June, 2012



COMMUNIQUE

PREAMBLE

The CPN Information Technology Professionals’ Assembly is a yearly gathering of Information Technology practitioners in Nigeria and diaspora with the objective of discussing and strategizing on emergent issues in Information Technology in order to come out with recommendations and decisions that will impact positively on the industry and the nation.

The theme for this years’ assembly was **“Information Technology and National Transformation”**. This year’s topic was informed by the need to highlight the current national drive for development in the area of Information Technology.

Lead speakers presented papers on the different topics that are associated with the main theme of the event. The lead paper was titled **“Leveraging on Information Technology for Accelerated National Transformation”**. Papers were also presented on **“Intelligence Gathering and National Security: Using Information Technology to Confront the Current Security Challenges”** and **“Cashless Transactions: Platforms, Challenges and Opportunities”**. Thereafter, the assembly broke into interactive sessions and a comprehensive discussion of the presentations was undertaken.

INTERACTIVE SESSION I:

INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AND NATIONAL SECURITY: USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TO COMBAT THE CURRENT SECURITY CHALLENGES

The session on “Intelligence Gathering and National Security: Using Information Technology to Confront the Current Security Challenges” discussed and agreed on the following:

- i. That Information Technology (IT) tools are indispensable in the collection and processing of intelligence information.
- ii. That poor infrastructural facilities, inadequate manpower, as well as absence of a national database are factors that are inhibiting IT contribution to Intelligence gathering in Nigeria.
- iii. Since Information Technology profession is knowledge based, it is extremely difficult for the profession to play the role expected of it in Intelligence Gathering and National Security without a concomitant human capacity development. Therefore, there is the urgent need to invest more on IT education.
- iv. There is little or no input to the development of Information Technology tools for intelligence gathering.

WAY FORWARD

- I. Due to the importance of security for the survival and corporate existence of any nation, there is the need for CPN and other Information Technology organizations to collaborate and reach out to security agencies and intelligence gathering organizations with a view to developing a purpose built software and hardware to enable the nation enhance its security and intelligence gathering. This is very important for the profession and the nation.

- II. We should endeavor to resort to local development of IT tools that will be useful in intelligence gathering and national security because continual patronage of foreign tools can compromise our national security.
- III. There is need for adequate attention to be paid to human capital development in Information Technology profession so as to enable it to be impactful in Intelligence gathering and national security.
- IV. Necessary machinery should be put in place for the setting up of a national database because the absence of a national database has been hindering the gathering and monitoring of intelligence in Nigeria.
- V. The session also advocated for a balance of the needs and imperatives of the private and public sectors along with individual privacy and National Security imperatives, because most Information Technology Infrastructure, Human Capacity and Finance are private sector owned in Nigeria and this can spell doom for our national security if it is not properly handled.

CONCLUSION

1. The session agreed that the Information Technology profession and the security agencies have not created a synergy that is required to solve the nation's security problems. Therefore, there is need for proper deployment of Information Technology in tackling the security challenges in the country. The security agencies have extended an open invitation to Information Technology professionals to collaborate with them through the developments of hardware and software solutions that could assist in providing solutions to the problem. This becomes imperative because the country is facing several regional threats arising from instability in Guinea, Mali, Algeria,

Libya, Niger, Chad, Darfur, Eritrea and Somalia and even further afield, combined with internal threats from “**Jama’atu Ahlis-Sunnah Lid Da’awati Wal Jihad**” popularly called **Boko Haram** as well and the likes of the Movements for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and others.

2. Towards this end, CPN calls on the National Security Agencies to engage Information Technology Professionals by putting in place a forum that will systematically and continuously review the current and emerging Information Technology trends and assess their possible impact on our security, with a view to anticipating and proactively outlining policy initiatives, technical solutions and security coordination requirements for the mitigation of identified threats, and exploitation of opportunities, posed by such technologies and trends.

INTERACTIVE SESSION II:

“CASHLESS TRANSACTIONS: PLATFORMS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES”

The session noted that Cashless policy is a good concept which is capable of saving the country several billions of Naira in transaction cost that could have been expended in cash transactions, which constitute about eighty percent of the total transactions of Nigerians in the banking industry.

The session agreed that the Nigerian financial ecosystem is evolving and robust.

Challenges

- i. There is the need for the proper integration of rural people into the Nigerian banking system and the cashless policy.
- ii. There is also the need to step up customer education on the cashless policy of the Central Bank.

- iii. The phobia for electronic mode of payment is real, most people prefer the usage of the traditional/manual system that they are used to.
- iv. The challenge of illiteracy is also there. That is, the inability of people to read, write or compute.
- v. The issue of Data protection, privacy and confidentiality need to be properly addressed.
- vi. The legal issue in the cashless policy, the issue of digital signature and the challenge of identity are issues that should be properly addressed in the cashless transactions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The session agreed that Information Technology professionals should rise up to the challenge of the cashless policy. They should use their knowledge and skills in Information Technology to develop more IT solutions that will assist in the acceptance and sustenance of the cashless policy. Also, there is need for the government to monitor the policy and its implementation very well because of its attendant security implication on the country. There is also the need for a survey or research to be carried out on the needs and expectations of the people as well as find ways of meeting those needs in order to boost the acceptance of the policy.

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Registrar/Secretary to Council