

2015 PRISM Conference – Denver

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Conference Summary Report

Once again, I would like to thank the Board for its approval of my attendance at annual PRISM (Public Retirement Information Systems Managers) conference. It is always a great opportunity to network with our IT peers from other public pension systems.

This year's conference was titled "Data – Clean, Useful, Safe". Given MPERA's current data cleansing/conversion effort and the increased focus in the industry on data security, it was a well-timed theme.

The first keynote speaker, John Sileo, spoke about information security and specifically about identity theft. Mr. Sileo has experienced first-hand the trauma of personal identity theft, once by an unknown culprit and again by his business partner. It was a sobering reminder of how easy and devastating having ones identity stolen can be.

I would like to highlight a few of the member led breakout sessions. The first by New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) was titled "Integrating Data to Streamline Business Operations". For the last 2 years, NYSLRS has been engaged in a redesign effort of their LOB system. This session highlighted some of their challenges and efforts to ensure the reliability and integrity of their data. They are migrating off a 30 year old CICS system. Both NYSLRS environment and challenges are similar to MPERA's. It was interesting and valuable to get their perspective on the effort. One notable challenge they faced was their staffs' 'maternal instinct to protect'. Many of their staff were quite defensive of 'their' data and wanted to be assured of its integrity in the new system.

Another session was a panel discussion on Security Measures, led by three different systems. They were the Public School and Education Employees Retirement systems of Missouri, the Fire and Police Pension Association of Colorado and the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. These systems shared their experiences with (among other things) performing network penetration testing, code reviews and security training methods and effectiveness. It was another valuable reminder of the need for strong passwords and a very strong argument for implementing two-factor authentication.

Another security focused presentation was given by Ira Greenstein of the Maryland State Retirement Agency. The title of his discussion was “Protecting Data from the Malicious Insider: Inherent Challenges”. This topic focused on the risks an organization is exposed to from internal threats, including data breaches, fraud and sabotage. Especially challenging is how to adequately protect and get ahead of such threats when such actions often times conflict directly with human resource management policies.

Some interesting statistics highlighted: *(although he cautioned that statistics vary greatly)*

96% of organizations experienced data breaches (malicious or erroneous)
(FireEye survey reported 2015)

54% of organizations had at least 1 data loss incident *(Check Point, January 2013)*

One in 7 employees would sell their password to a 3rd party *(starting at \$150, per SailPoint’s 7th Annual “Market Pulse Survey” January 2015)*

Insiders = 24% of total breaches in govt. *(Verizon 2014 DBIR)*

Smaller or “weaker” organizations are hit harder

PRISM has always been a great venue for sharing information and ideas with our IT peers and this year was another great example.

My thanks again to the board for this opportunity.