THE TOP 5 MOST PRESSING IT ISSUES IN 2019

From cloud technology to IoT, from privacy concerns to preparing for technology that hasn't yet been commercialized – here are the top five most pressing IT issues in 2019.

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Every year, digital acceleration leads to new opportunities – and new challenges. With the number of technology solutions constantly growing and evolving, IT teams are facing increased pressure to evaluate and implement the best solutions that deliver business value and drive innovation.

While IT issues are becoming more complex, the value IT teams bring to their organizations is rapidly growing. The most successful CIOs and IT teams will recognize and face these challenges head on to help their organizations adapt and excel at their digital transformation goals.

From cloud technology to IoT, from privacy concerns to preparing for technology that hasn't yet been commercialized – here are the top five most pressing IT issues in 2019.

1. Privacy Compliance

With GDPR now in effect and data privacy scandals rocking the second half of 2018, privacy and compliance is a major concern for IT managers in 2019. Data breaches are occurring on a larger scale in almost every industry. These high-profile breaches are putting pressure on governments around the world to put safeguards in place to protect consumer data. If IT managers aren't prepared to prioritize privacy, not only will organizations suffer compliance penalties, but they will also suffer from a lack of customer trust and poor reputation.

2. Preparing for 5G

While it's debated when 5G will become mainstream, one thing that's certain is that IT departments will be thinking of how it will impact the enterprise's operations. For one, new solutions and devices that are compatible with 5G will be released and IT teams will need to plan how to roll these out both tactically and financially. 5G millimeter wave adapters are expensive to deploy, and IT teams will also need to ensure that antennas are placed in an effective manner, considering 5G networks don't easily reach indoors and requires several small cells to manage deployment. 5G also raises a red flag for security. 5G will open up new ways for cyberattacks to enter networks and workplace environments, and IT teams will need to prioritize security when preparing for these new networks.

3. Blockchain Integration

The benefits of transparency, security, and reliability are making blockchain a compelling technology for enterprises across a number of industries. In 2019, we'll be hearing more about blockchain as IT teams prioritize its integration.

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Blockchain is moving from hype to reality; as an example, IBM, a leader in blockchain, has deployed over 400. The perceived lack of technical and process standards in place for this technology is putting pressure on IT teams to quickly standardize the technology and platforms.

4. Evaluating and Controlling AI Deployments

In 2018 we saw the shift of AI turn from all talk to reality. In 2019, with more AI platforms readily available for enterprises, IT teams will need to determine how to best evaluate and control AI deployments for their organization. Major concerns IT managers will have to overcome include determining the appropriate AI project scope and managing AI skills, training, and knowledge transfer.

5. IoT Security

Businesses are starting to deploy more IoT devices including industrial machines, smart energy grids, and building automation. The more IoT devices that are deployed, the more data there is. Securing this data is a major

priority as privacy breaches are on the rise and governments are increasingly looking to regulate data. However, IoT devices aren't necessarily built with security in mind, and there's often no way to install security on the device itself. Instead, IT teams need to ensure their entire network infrastructure is segmented and protected.

IT Issues De-prioritized in 2019

While there are many other issues IT managers should be considering, the five issues listed above will have a growing impact on IT teams this year. On the flip side, there are some concerns that IT teams have faced in the past that are not as high of a priority this year.

Skills Gap

Cloud environments are changing the skills gap in IT teams. Enterprises that have migrated to a cloud environment will benefit from a minimal learning curve and therefore don't need to be as concerned with skills gaps, while those who have remained on-premise may actually have an increased concern in managing

skills gaps.

Moving to the cloud

Until recently, cloud technologies weren't as advanced, and many early adopters had to manage implementations without help from outside vendors. During this time when many cloud technologies were still unproven, implementation horror stories emerged, giving cloud solutions a reputation for being burdensome. This is far from the truth today, and cloud technology is much simpler. Additionally, enterprises no longer have to go it alone. There are many dedicated professional services teams who help enterprises implement the technology.

Rapid changes and advances in technology is putting more pressure on IT teams, but it also presents an opportunity for IT managers to show their value to organizations. As we can see, IT priorities are constantly shifting, and we can expect to see even more changes next year at this time.