Commercial Solutions

RISE OF THE CYBER MEGACOMMUNITY:
CONNECTED THREATS DEMAND CONNECTED SOLUTIONS

Booz Allen Hamilton Commercial Solutions combines industry knowledge and relevant experience with the right people and technologies to reduce risk, improve safety, and increase profitability for your business. Together, we can enable you to thrive—today, tomorrow, and beyond.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Internet has incredible connective power. It has integrated our economy and empowered business in ways we could not have imagined a few years ago. But it has also created challenges that are greater than one company can handle on its own. For this reason, industries are uniting to address cyber challenges that impact the economic ecosystems in which they operate. The need, however, stretches beyond a single industry, as cyber threats extend across organizational and industrial boundaries. This phenomenon underlines the need for a Megacommunity approach—cooperation between industries to solve common challenges and achieve larger goals. Through Megacommunities, companies and industries can gain greater insight into and thrive across their economic ecosystems.

Today’s leaders are taking a closer look at the growing dependencies between organizations within their industry, driven by the speed of innovation, greater connectivity, and increased reliance on shared suppliers. They know that the global landscape—including decisions from foreign governments, social unrest, and even global weather patterns—can impact operations and the bottom line. Yet many still give little attention to the mounting cross-industry connections, including cyber security.

As technology integration increases and companies expand outsourcing efforts, organizations—and industries—must go a step further. Leaders can no longer act in insolation: Now is the time for cooperative action to secure businesses and industry against complex cyber threats.

At Booz Allen, we pioneered the Megacommunity concept for exactly this reason—to unite industry and government, rally resources, and deliver an enduring solution for a common challenge. Through our insights and experience, we are poised to create a new cyber Megacommunity to ensure the economic potential unleashed by the Internet is protected from the inevitable dark side of technology.
THE CONNECTED MARKET

As business becomes more global, technology more complex, and threats more sophisticated, companies must collaborate across industry to thrive.

You cannot succeed alone
The steady increase in the volume and maturity of cyber attacks has forced companies to a harsh realization: You cannot succeed alone. Cyber attackers are more organized, better funded, and more sophisticated than any single organization. These threat actors collaborate in dark corners of the Internet to gang up on companies, coordinate attacks, and sell stolen information on black markets.

In response, companies have started to share information and develop a collaborative approach to cyber security. Companies are beginning with what they know, forging connections within their industries where they already share common interests. As industries formalize their collaboration, they are building Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs) to foster and facilitate the secure sharing of vetted, actionable, and timely information among members. ISACs focus on physical security, cyber security, or both and are helping companies unite to solve collective challenges too complex for any one organization to handle on its own.

Protecting the ecosystem
The new, connected ecosystem links organizations across industries like never before, including transactions, technology, supply chains, and human resources. Increased awareness of these dependencies brings many positive effects—generating cost savings, increasing speed of innovation, and making industries more resilient. Yet this interdependence also creates new threats.

Though industry ISACs are a move in the right direction, they do not address the entire threat. Technology and innovation are blurring the lines between industries, making it increasingly difficult to treat cyber threats as a single-industry problem.

These challenges are changing behaviors as three key drivers push organizations to look beyond their own industries for cyber security collaboration:

- **Technology is breaking down industry barriers.**
  The rate of new technology is bending and breaking some of the most basic assumptions underpinning how companies operate. In the auto industry, for example, “connected” vehicles are interacting with each other and the Internet, creating an immense fleet of mobile platforms. This not only generates new revenue opportunities but also exposes automakers to cyber threats and risks they never had to consider before.

- **Attackers do not discriminate.**
  The bad guys do not care about industry lines. They will often try a similar type of attack in many different sectors to see where they can have the most success. They will even reuse attack techniques that have been played out in one sector and try them in a different area in the hopes that the new target industry has not been paying attention.

- **Supply chains are becoming attack chains.**
  Attackers have become more sophisticated in how they access their targets. They will, for example, use cross-industry supply chains to infect components of a final product before it is assembled and delivered to their final target, making it even harder to detect the attack. Threat actors are betting that disparate industries will not have the coordination in place to even realize they have been compromised, much less share key information.

As with any conventional threat, the like-minded need to band together —and are only as strong as the weakest link. The need is clear: The more connected we become, the more we need to work together. Threat actors work across industry lines – companies should too.
MEGACOMMUNITY IN ACTION

The Megacommunity concept
A Megacommunity is a group of cross-sector organizations—business, government, and non-governmental organizations—that unite to take on a common challenge. Different sectors are linked through connective dependencies or points at which they execute transactions, exchange information, or compete for resources. The greater the connective dependencies between organizations, the more susceptible those industries are to dynamics in related sectors. Although issues might be in different sectors (e.g., technology, manufacturing, transportation, or retail), they likely have a high degree of connectivity that requires a common approach. Cooperation is critical.

Shared dependencies alone aren’t enough to make a Megacommunity. The industries also need to have convergence of “vital interests.” Organizations increasingly face challenges that transcend a single industry and require the collective impact of the Megacommunity collaboration. In this regard, we see a Megacommunity rising from a series of web-enabled and connected micro-communities. Cyber threats are driving the vital interest between many sectors. They pose a common threat to entire ecosystems and often target business operations, such as supply chains, that impact multiple sectors.

Making Megacommunities work
Megacommunities can be a powerful mechanism to solve cross-industry challenges, but they must also be carefully developed and maintained. They include collections of different organizations—sometimes from across industries—with often overlapping, competing agendas, and operating models.

To be successful, a Megacommunity must address several key factors:

- **Set a clear direction.**
  From the outset, Megacommunity leaders must identify a shared challenge and related vision for the community—in tangible, bold, and achievable terms.

- **Establish clear boundaries and governance.**
  Representatives from different organizations need clear roles—and the processes, procedures, accountability, and limits must be well defined. It is also critically important that organizations maintain full autonomy outside of the Megacommunity.

- **Share a commitment to engage.**
  Megacommunities are diverse networks of organizations that span sectors of the economy. They must use these networks, both technically and physically, to sense community needs and understand collective operating environments. As potential facilitators of cyber threat information to combat cross-industry threat actors, Megacommunities must establish agreed upon standards and sharing protocols to ensure they do not become the next target.

- **Remain biased toward action.**
  Megacommunities will quickly dissipate without action. This means that the community must provide clear objectives against which each member can execute. Activity, especially early, is crucial for success.

As companies better understand their role in the larger economic ecosystem, leaders must emerge to work toward this Megacommunity approach. These champions are often senior executives from market leading organizations. They have the market position to guide their industries and the foresight to reach beyond their specific industries and collaborate across sectors. They appreciate that we are much stronger working together than we are apart, and they know that—to address the cyber realities we all face—we must tap the power of the entire ecosystem.
MAKE IT REAL

Adversaries are organized, networked, and actively collaborate to attack companies and industries. Impacts from one industry can have significant—and often hidden—effects on other industries. It is time for industries to come together as cohesive networks of organizations to combat threats, face mutual challenges, and accomplish common goals. Bad actors and their capabilities are growing, and it will take a Megacommunity to respond.

For almost a decade, Booz Allen has helped governments and private sector industries around the globe unite to meet challenges that they could not face alone. In fact, we pioneered the concept of the Megacommunity, beginning with interviews of more than 100 CEOs, heads of state, and NGO leaders to identify how they could band together across geographies, politics, and industries. We analyzed their insights, developing the Megacommunity concept to tackle tough issues, such as post-war veteran reintegration, economic development, cross-border conflict resolution, alternative energy, and education.

We are now poised to apply these lessons and successes directly to the evolving cyber security challenge, including:

- **Enhancing Supply Chain Cyber Security**: Supply chains cross industry lines; so do cyber security concerns. A Megacommunity will help protect every shared link in the supply chain.
- **Expanding the Constrained Talent Pool**: Different industries are fighting for the same, small pool of cyber talent. A Megacommunity approach to expanding the talent pool will reap benefits across industries.
- **Igniting Innovation Development**: Innovations are creating new competitive and collaborative environments between non-traditional industries. A Megacommunity can help focus resources and identify mutually beneficial co-investment opportunities.

At Booz Allen, we think differently. With experience and insights that extend beyond traditional boundaries, we bring a cross-industry perspective to anticipate trends, re-imagine the market landscape, and anticipate interdependencies created by new technology. We blend technology and human expertise to provide business edge, experts on the ground, and state-of-the-art solutions that allow our clients to solve their most complex problems. We are leaders in the challenges facing industry—in cyber, analytics, privacy, and beyond. Our success is measured by our ability to help organizations transform and thrive.

To learn how Booz Allen Hamilton can help your business thrive, contact:

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