

# Directors and Governance Experts Explore New Paradigm in Cybersecurity

By Katie Swafford

Corporate directors, dignitaries, and governance experts gathered early this summer at the Hotel President Wilson in Geneva, Switzerland—one address south of the Palais Wilson, the birthplace of the League of Nations—for a meeting of the minds at NACD’s 2018 Global Cyber Forum.

While the goal of the forum was perhaps less lofty than the assemblage of the League of Nations, attendees similarly connected over common goals: to secure their companies as stable participants in the world economy, and to seek answers to some of the most pressing policy and governance challenges of the digital age.

More than 100 directors and governance experts made their way to Geneva for the first evening of programming on April 18 and were treated to a gourmet French dinner and the hotel’s famous strawberry cake while enjoying a presentation on the history of cryptology by physicist and author Simon Singh. The following day featured a fast-paced review of the state of cyber-risk oversight and policy changes at a series of sessions hosted by representatives from KPMG, Rapid7, American International Group (AIG), and the Internet Security Alliance.

By noon, it had become apparent that business must be viewed through a new digital paradigm, requiring a reordering of boardroom agendas. Moreover, what’s needed is greater cooperation between boardroom leaders, lawmakers, and other organizations of influence seeking to secure the global economy.

## A Proliferation of Regulations

Despite the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) being just five weeks from going into effect at the time of the forum, mention of GDPR passed in and out of panel conversations as a matter of fact. Instead, a handful of sessions highlighted the growing concern over the proliferation of regulations in many nations that may be enforced against offenders in other countries.

Attendees heard a keynote discussion between NACD CEO and President Peter R. Gleason and the Baroness Pauline Neville-Jones, senior advisor at Ridge Global. Previously, Neville-Jones served as the minister of state for security and counterterrorism in the UK Home Office, and was instrumental in the establishment of the United Kingdom’s earliest cybersecurity strategy.


While Neville-Jones’ knowledge of cyber risk painted vivid

images of the challenges facing the United Kingdom, an audience question prompted her to note the challenges of building coalition-based policy that would simplify the prosecution of cybercriminals and allow like-minded states to pool their power. After one attendee mentioned Microsoft President Brad Smith’s call for a “digital Geneva Convention” at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Neville-Jones urged the audience to encourage their governments to form policy alliances with other nations that share the same values, such as free speech and the right to privacy.

## Creating Value by Leading With Values

Another speaker also addressed two types of value: monetary and ethical. Joshua Klein, a technologist and systems thinker, was invited to the forum to brief the audience on new technology, the risks inherent as technology disrupts business models, and the positive and negative sides of what technology can do—and already is doing—to the social fabric. Klein’s thesis is that technology is changing—and in some instances damaging—business models faster than companies can keep up. That damage is causing cultures to change in lockstep, altering the way people spend their time and make a living. Citing everything from the genome-editing tool CRISPR/Cas9 to Amazon.com’s Alexa (which he deemed his own personal technology “whipping boy”), Klein described a world where ethical leadership is missing.

Enter corporate directors. Klein charged attendees to place experimentation over profit, and to do so with an emphasis on minimizing harm and maximizing benefits to both consumers and society. One attendee asked Klein who should be leading that change, noting that security and business model flaws seem built-in, particularly at young technology start-ups. Klein responded that directors are in a unique position to champion ethical leadership.

He also suggested that as new technologies drive changes in employment opportunities, the competition for the best talent will create stronger value systems as a means of attracting and retaining highly talented employees. Those individuals will be drawn to and more likely to stay at companies with stronger value systems, he added, over others who might accept higher pay but a weaker value system. Klein said that by building goodwill, companies are more likely to weather changes at home and abroad. 



1. **Pauline Neville-Jones**, senior advisor, Ridge Global  
2. NACD CEO and President **Peter R. Gleason**  
3. From left: **John Hermans**, cybersecurity lead partner, KPMG LLP; **Maya Bundt**, head, cyber and digital solutions, Swiss Reinsurance Co.; **Sara Grootwassink Lewis**, audit committee chair, Sun Life Financial; and **Richard Spearman**, group corporate security director, Vodafone Group



4. From left: **Jen Ellis**, vice president, policy and public affairs, Rapid7; **Phyllis A. Schneck**, managing director and global leader of cyber solutions, Promontory Financial Group; and **Koen Gijsbers**, senior advisor, Network Centric Industry Operations Industry Consortium



5. From left: **Greg Bell**, global cybersecurity practice co-leader and principal, KPMG; **Sara Grootwassink Lewis**; **Jeff Brown**, vice president, chief information security officer, Raytheon Co.; **William E. McCracken**, director, MDU Resources Group; **Carol Meyers**, chief marketing officer, Rapid7; **Dennis T. Whalen**, leader, Board Leadership Center, KPMG; **Lucy Fato**, executive vice president and general counsel, American International Group



6. **Josh Klein**, technologist  
7. **Simon Singh**, physicist  
8. From left: **Erin Essenmacher**, NACD chief programming officer; **Shelley Leibowitz**, president, SL Advisory; **Anastassia Lauterbach**, independent director, Dun & Bradstreet Corp.; and **Larry Clinton**, president and CEO, Internet Security Alliance