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Guest Editor

## Up.link

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**E**xecutives and managers need information to make decisions that positively affect the overall success of the organization (headcount reporting, ROI, etc.).

Employees, in general, require functionally related information to perform their job as defined by the position's requirements (salary data for compensation analysts, voluntary deduction details for benefits specialists, etc.). High-quality decisions rely on good data, data that is easily accessible from repositories virtually anywhere and at any time.

The Internet makes it possible to deploy such information to managers, employees, vendors, suppliers, customers, etc. However, are our systems too open? Is HR information at greater risk of theft from increasingly sophisticated hackers and ne'er-do-wells? Are we doing a good job screening applicants and performing exit interviews? During 2004, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission received 635,000 consumer complaints, of which 61 percent represented fraud and 39 percent reflected identity theft complaints (Source: National and State Trends in Fraud and Identity Theft, Federal Trade Commission, February 1, 2005, [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)). What is identity theft and how can we fight it? Our first feature article is "HR Data in Harm's Way: Be Very Afraid," from Brian Sommers. He addresses the increasing vulnerability of our data, citing real-world examples including one from personal experience, and

suggests a plan to mitigate risks. Protection of information is a corporate-wide matter since firms cannot afford the costs and brand damage should breaches occur.

Inaccurate and/or missing information potentially yields bad day-to-day decisions, business credibility issues and/or regulatory compliance reporting problems. So, how good is your data? Our second article, "HR Data Quality: Why It Matters...and How to Get There from Here," by John Sopoci and Tom Keebler, addresses this second aspect of information management. The article looks at several reasons why having quality data is business critical, examines some of the causes leading to "bad" data, and offers methods that organizations have employed to assure data integrity.

Technology has created remarkable challenges and opportunities in the workplace. Every day, we are spawning new ways of viewing and thinking about information. In our third feature, Noel Hannon asks the question "What a Wonderful (Wireless) World Will It Be?" and writes about the technological changes we've experienced in the last 25 years since IHRIM was established. How important is it for us to have immediate access to what we need when we need it, and what are some of our connectivity expectations moving forward?

Our last feature article, "Streamlining e-Recruitment at Beth

Israel Deaconess Medical Center," by France Lampron, delves into continuous improvement. Beth Israel implemented PeopleSoft's eBenefits and eRecruitment modules a year ago and was looking to get more out of those applications. A high-level methodology is presented, identifying how this was successfully accomplished at this organization.

In "Technology Finally Advances HR," by Samuel Greengard (published in *E-Work Architect: How HR Leads the Way Using the Internet*, an IHRIM Press Book), it is noted that "The Web is allowing HR to take on a bigger view of the organization;" that it is possible to deploy most types of applications out on the Internet, with online recruiting as one of the hottest. This *IHRIM.link* issue focuses on various aspects of information management to consider as HR, and companies in general, continue to take advantage of the ever-growing number of software and tools designed to broaden our reach. From data to information, from paper flow to automation, from siloed approaches to employee engagement, always consider risk mitigation while leveraging HR information for business decisions.

We hope you find the articles in this issue helpful. A special thank you to department editor Patricia Fletcher for her efforts in acquiring an interesting and informative collection of articles for your reading enjoyment.