

CobiT3 Usage Survey

Growing acceptance of CobiT

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Introduction

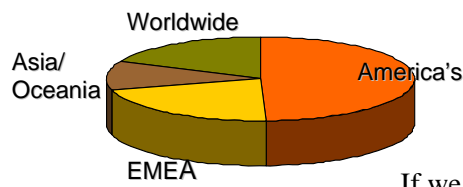
ISACA is very committed to the continuing growth and improvement of the COBIT family of products. There are numerous efforts to achieve this goal and one of them is gathering and quantifying information about the owners of CobiT. This was done for the first and the second edition of CobiT by running a 'usage survey', which delivered each time very important 'lessons learned'. In May 2002, ISACA/F/ITGI has run a similar usage survey for CobiT's third edition. Goal of this survey was to find out how and why CobiT3 is used and to determine future needs. In this article you will find some of the most important finding and conclusions of this research effort. We are convinced that it contains very useful information for the future development of CobiT.

Methodology

As already mentioned, a similar usage survey was run for the first and the second edition of CobiT. We repeated several of the questions of these previous surveys, but we also expanded it by adding some new ones specifically for CobiT3 and future editions. The survey was conducted by Industry Insights, an independent research firm, and they reported the results to ISACA/FITGI in the aggregate only. The questionnaire was sent to the purchasers of CobiT's third edition. Of this group, 182 persons completed the survey.

Findings

Figure 1: Geography



We reached enterprises with different profiles and these profiles give us some information about what kind of enterprises are using CobiT. The participants were located in different continents and working in a variety of business sectors. The financial sector however was very prominently present.

If we measure the size of an enterprise in number of employees, it seemed that CobiT is mostly used by larger enterprises. This was to be expected, because smaller companies will less likely have an IT audit function in place, which is often the entry point for CobiT into an enterprise. Nevertheless, a very important conclusion of the survey is the fact that, in general, the acceptance and adoption of CobiT is growing. A clear evidence of this can be found in figure 6, which is referred to later on in this article.

Figure 2: Employees

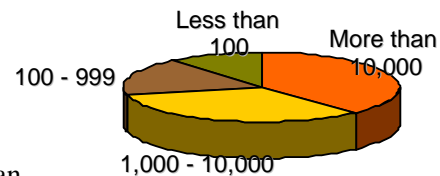
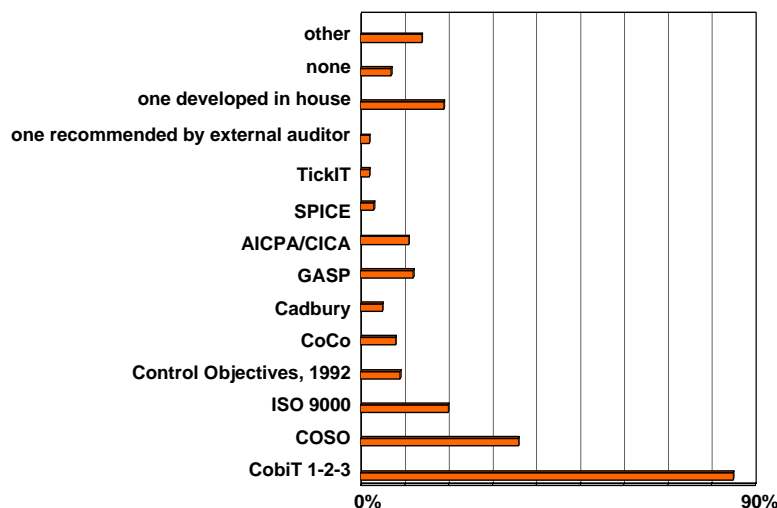


Figure 3: Followed control methodologies



One of the questions we asked is what control methodologies enterprises are currently using. Knowing that the invitation to participate in this survey was sent to the owners of CobiT3, a strong bias for CobiT was to be expected here. This expectation is also represented in Figure 3. Yet, other methodologies are often used in concert with CobiT. Most important one's are COSO and ISO9000. Moreover, 19% of the respondents said that they developed an own methodology in house.

Now that we know what control methodologies people are following, we would also like to know what the reasons are for acquiring CobiT3. From all the reactions, we extracted the 5 most important reasons, as listed in Figure 4. We compared these results with CobiT's second edition usage survey to identify possible evolutions. The results appeared to be very similar with the results of the second edition survey. However, the second reason in this list (guidance for IT Governance), which recognises the importance of

Figure 4: Most important reasons for acquiring CobiT3

- Improve audit approach/programs
- CobiT3 provide guidance for IT Governance
- Standardize audit approach/programs
- CobiT3 as valuable benchmark for IS/IT controls
- Improve IS/IT controls

the governance and the management layer, was not mentioned in the previous survey. This is very logical as CobiT was initially set up from a control and audit perspective of the IT environment. It was CobiT's third edition that added a management and governance layer on top of that. Issues like goal setting, performance measurement and maturity modelling, very important in this context, are extensively described in CobiT3.

The results of the survey showed that nearly 75% of those who acquired CobiT3 are effectively using it. And of those who use it, close to 85% at most slightly modify it. But in what ways are people working with this open standard?

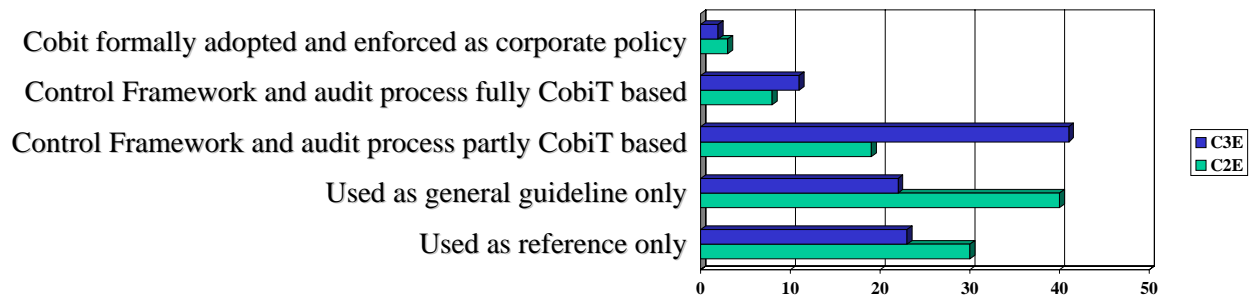
By comparing the most important reasons for acquiring with the most important ways of use, we created an 'expectations versus reality' check. The reasons for acquiring are the expectations and the way of use is of course the reality. When we compare the top 5 ways CobiT3 is used, it appeared they are mostly in line with the reason why people bought it. Again, we compared these results with the second edition usage survey and we identified an emerging shift from assurance to implementation. Issues like control validation and IT risk evaluation transitioned more into IT improvement and IT risk reduction.

Figure 5: Most important ways CobiT3 is used

- For audit planning and audit program development
- To validate our current IT controls
- To evaluate IT risks
- To reduce IT risks
- As a framework for improving IT

The participants also expressed the expectation that, by implementing CobiT, communication would improve between audit and the different management layers (business, IT and senior management) as well as between IT and senior management. However, when asking how CobiT was actually used (after implementation), we found that CobiT3 has really only helped improving communications of audit with IT management and of audit with senior management.

In the survey, we also examined how formal the use is of CobiT within the organisation. The same question was asked in the second edition survey and a comparison of the results indicated that much less people are using CobiT as a reference only or guideline only and much more people are saying that the control framework and audit process is partly or fully CobiT based. These results are represented in figure 6. This proves that the acceptance and adoption of CobiT is growing.

Figure 6: How formal is the use of CobiT?

Conclusion

The acceptance of CobiT is clearly growing and ISACA/ITGI is very determined to support this evolution by continuously developing this open standard. This is crucial taken the often turbulent and fast moving (ICT) business environment into account.

About three quarters of the correspondents stated that they were effectively using CobiT as a basis to build up a control framework and an audit process. To achieve this, the generic CobiT framework is mostly not or only slightly modified and sometimes used in concert with other control methodologies. The purchasers of CobiT appreciate that the framework provides a guideline for IT management and governance. Issues like performance measurement and maturity modelling, extremely important in this context, are available in the third edition. In the effective use of CobiT, we identified an emerging shift from assurance to implementation. Issues like control validation and IT risk evaluation transitioned more into IT improvement and IT risk reduction.

ISACA/ITGI is very pleased with all the very useful information it gathered by this survey and wants to thank all the users of CobiT and especially the participants of the survey for their support to the CobiT framework.

About UAMS

UAMS (University Antwerp Management School) has the ambition to be a “learning partner in management”, by offering a broad range of training programmes for future and current managers in the business world, in public services and social-profit organizations. The priorities cover optimal quality control, interactive teaching methods, an emphasis on research-based knowledge and best practice, an international orientation and a continuous adaptation of our programmes to the needs of the market.

About ITAG

The Information Technology Alignment and Governance (ITAG) Research Institute, was established in within UAMS to host applied research in the domains of IT Governance and business/IT alignment. The research centre is an initiative of Prof. dr. Wim Van Grembergen and dr. Steven De Haes. Both have research and practical experience in the IT Governance and Strategic Alignment domains. Recently, this team was reinforced by senior researcher Hilde Van Brempt.

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