

## Editorial

# The Romanian Association for Information Security Assurance (RAISA): Ten Years in the Service of Cybersecurity

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1. *Cybersecurity or information technology security (IT security)* is the protection of computer systems and networks from attack by malicious actors that may result in unauthorised information disclosure, theft of, or damage to hardware, software, or data, as well as from the disruption or misdirection of the services they provide [1].

The field has become significant due to the expanded reliance on computer systems, the Internet, and wireless network standards such as Bluetooth and Wi-Fi and to the growth of smart devices and the various devices that constitute the Internet of Things (IoT).

Cybersecurity is one of the most significant challenges of the contemporary world due to the complexity of information systems and the societies they support. Security is essential for systems that govern large-scale systems with far-reaching physical effects, such as power distribution, elections, and finance [2].

Today we are all aware of the importance of the *IT security field* and its role in the smooth development of all human activity.

2. A decade ago - in November 2012 - when the concepts related to this field were not yet sufficiently well implemented (at least, at the level of Romania), at the initiative of a group of enthusiastic and dedicated professionals to the IT security field from the [EUROQUALROM Laboratory](#) of the Faculty of Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technology of the University "Politehnica" of Bucharest (including two university professors with experience, pioneers of the dependability field in Romania) and from the Police Academy "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Bucharest has founded **the Romanian Association for Information Security Assurance - RAISA**<sup>1</sup>, a professional, non-governmental, non-partisan political, non-profit and public benefit association [3].

During the years since then, other experts from academia, research, the corporate environment, and public administration - mainly PhD graduates in the field - have joined RAISA's efforts to promote cybersecurity at the national level.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.raisa.org/>

All those involved in the development of RAISA understood the importance of the domain, the unique perspectives of the development of the field and the fact that only the implementation of a vast culture of cybersecurity can contribute to its success.

The aim of the *Romanian Association for Information Security Assurance* was to promote and support information security activities in compliance with applicable laws and to create a community for the exchange of knowledge between specialists, academic and corporate environment in Romania, based on values such as (a) continuous investment in education; (b) openness to new methods to secure information; (c) involvement in combating the cybercrime phenomenon; (d) focus on facts; (e) concern for excellence.

The vision of RAISA was to promote research and education in the information security field, to contribute to creating and disseminating knowledge and technology in this domain and to create a strong "cybersecurity culture" at the national level.

**3. Cybersecurity** involves several technical and informational solutions that must be adopted and implemented to position an organisation for the most excellent resiliency in a complex threat landscape. Technology is necessary for addressing cyber threats, but it cannot work independently of complementary factors such as policy guidelines, information sharing on threats, and user awareness [4].

In the context of the recent global cyber-attacks, it is essential to underline that while organisations continue to purchase and deploy technical controls, more needs to be done to focus on the *human side of cybersecurity* - so-named *layer 8*.

IT professionals often use layer 8 to refer to employees' lack of awareness and a weak cybersecurity culture. Today, it is just as essential to secure *human assets - layer 8* - as it is to secure layers 1 through 7 [5].

Consequently, all countries, professional organisations, and companies must consolidate a robust "*cybersecurity culture*" [6]. That's why one of the most critical objectives of RAISA during these five years beginning period was to build a "*cybersecurity culture*" in Romania.

Among the RAISA achievements aimed at implementing a culture of cybersecurity in our country, we can mention the following ones:

- Implementation of several **RAISA web portals** specialised in *IT security*, **Information Security** ([www.securitatea-informatiilor.ro](http://www.securitatea-informatiilor.ro)), **Cybercrime** ([www.criminalitatea-informatica.ro](http://www.criminalitatea-informatica.ro)), **Cybersecurity** ([www.securitatea-cibernetica.ro](http://www.securitatea-cibernetica.ro)), **Network Security** ([www.securitatea-retelelor.ro](http://www.securitatea-retelelor.ro)); these portals aim to make available to those interested in recent IT security information.
- Development of several successful **RAISA research projects** in the field, which covered a variety of issues, starting from *Protection of Computer Systems Against Cybercrime Phenomenon*, *Analysis of the Computer Networks Security* and up to *Strengthen Cybersecurity Education and Research for Preventing Cybercrime*, *Fighting Crime and Corruption* - all integrated to the final goal of *Enhance Cyber Capacity Building in Romania for Preventing and Combating the Cybercrime Phenomenon*.
- In recent years, RAISA has implemented several projects with international participation. We mention among these: *Fighting Crime and Corruption*, a project developed by the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of

Cassation and Justice with the help of RAISA, funded by the *Justice Programme of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021; Strengthen Cybersecurity Education and Research for Preventing Cybercrime and Enhance Cyber Capacity Building in Romania for Preventing and Combating the Cybercrime Phenomenon* projects developed by RAISA with the support of the *U.S. Embassy in Romania* (see Appendix).

- The organisation of several **RAISA workshops**, dedicated primarily to young researchers, engineers, MSc, and PhD students in the IT field (especially in cybersecurity); we could mention among the engaging workshops which led to vivid debates the following ones: *Methods for cyber-attacks investigation, Access to education and information through the Internet, Information security in Office applications, Technologies for websites development* a.o.
- Organisation and coordination (by Prof. Ioan Bacivarov, PhD and Assoc. Prof. I.C. Mihai, PhD) of special sections/sessions on IT Security and Cybercrime at recent *international conferences & symposia* in the field, including the *International IEEE Conference in Quality and Dependability* - from **CCF 2012** to **CCF 2018** (sessions *Dependability, Risk, Security*), **Cybercon Romania International Conference** ([www.cybercon.ro](http://www.cybercon.ro)).
- Support (organisation of debates, specialised software, etc.) for developing the Master Programme "*Quality and Dependability in Electronics and Telecommunications - ICSFET*" from the Faculty of Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technology, University Politehnica of Bucharest.
- Elaboration - in the last decade, under the aegis of RAISA - of several books, reports, and guides in the field of IT and dependability security by key members and collaborators of RAISA, including I. Bacivarov, I.C. Mihai, Angelica Bacivarov, C. Ciuchi, G. Petrică a.o. (see Appendix).

4. Undoubtedly, one of the main achievements of the RAISA - the "crown pearl" of the association - is **IJISC** - the scientific journal that RAISA has decided to publish since 2012 [7].

**IJISC** - the *International Journal of Information Security and Cybercrime* is an international scientific peer-reviewed journal aiming to bring together the latest high-level research and development in information security and the latest methods to prevent and combat the cybercrime phenomenon.

The *Editorial Board* of **IJISC** includes specialists in information security and cybercrime from academic police structures and university departments, their activity taking place under the close guidance of an *International Scientific Board* composed of internationally recognised personalities from the academic field.

In ten years of existence, academics and researchers from 30 countries have chosen **IJISC** for the submission of their scientific papers, and well-known professors and researchers from 13 countries have joined the *IJISC International Scientific Board*. **IJISC** has grown tremendously over the last ten years in terms of its academic quality and international visibility.

At this moment, **IJISC** is indexed in several *international databases* for scientific journals, including the following ones: EBSCOhost; CEEOL (Central and Eastern

European Online Library); Google Scholar; CrossRef; Global Impact Factor; Cite Factor - Academic Scientific Journals; OCLC WorldCat; MIAR - Information Matrix for the Analysis of Journals; HeinOnline; ACADEMIA.edu; Mendeley - Academic Social Network; SCIPPIO - Scientific Publishing & Information Online a.o. Permanent links to published papers are maintained using the Digital Object Identifier system by CrossRef.

The *International Journal of Information Security and Cybercrime - IJISC* will carry its mission into the future with the aims of enhancing the journal's scientific level and global impact, continuing to provide readers with access to high-quality research, strengthening its digital publication capabilities, and ultimately becoming a top international journal in the field of cybersecurity.

5. Another achievement of which RAISA is proud is the organisation of the *CyberCon Romania Conference*, which aims to raise cyber awareness, embody the cybersecurity culture, and share best practices in fighting cybercrime.

CyberCon Romania unites top professionals in cybersecurity and related domains with the following objectives:

- Enhancing awareness about cyber threats and their impact.
- Cultivating a strong cybersecurity culture among individuals and organisations.
- Facilitating the exchange of practical strategies and best practices in combatting cybercrime.
- Encouraging innovation and research in the development of advanced cybersecurity solutions and tools.
- Fostering international collaboration to address global cyber challenges.

The last edition of the conference, *CyberCon Romania 2022*, was organised in May 2022 by the Romanian Association for Information Security Assurance (RAISA) with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Romania. Conference partners were the Romanian National Cyber Security Directorate, National Cyberint Center, Romanian Police, Romanian National Institute of Magistracy, Romanian Banking Institute, European Institute of Romania, National Association for Information Systems Security (ANSSI), the ISACA - Romania Chapter, CIO Council Romania, and the Cyber Security Research Center from Romania.

6. The coming years will bring new challenges for RAISA. The main one refers to the increasingly intensive use of *artificial intelligence (AI)* techniques in *cybersecurity*.

One of the reasons for the rapid acceleration of cybercrime is the lower barrier to entry for malicious actors. Cybercriminals have evolved their business models: the use of large language models (LLMs) like *ChatGPT* to write *malicious code* also highlights the potential cybersecurity challenges.

Because of these threats, business leaders in today's digital world must know about AI's developments. According to *Forbes*, 76% of enterprises have prioritised AI and machine learning in their IT budgets [8]. As a result, **AI** is becoming an essential tool in the fight against cybercrime.

7. Analysing in retrospect the first decade of activity of RAISA, we can proudly state that all the objectives considered for establishing this organisation have been fulfilled.

In the current international conditions, a period full of challenges follows for all those who work in cybersecurity. This period can be successfully overcome only through the close cooperation of specialists in this sensitive and challenging field.

And RAISA, through its specialists, is ready to respond to these critical challenges and contribute to fulfilling its primary goal, promoting *cybersecurity culture in Romania*.

### Acknowledgements

At this anniversary moment, we sincerely thank all those involved in these ten years of **RAISA**'s activities and have contributed decisively to their success: IT professionals, engineers, and PhD students in the IT field and academics.

Special thanks to all those who have supported the development and growth of the **IJISC** magazine, which has been transformed in 10 years into a recognised international scientific journal in major international databases: readers, authors, reviewers, Editors, and members of the International Scientific Board.

### Note

To mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of **RAISA**, the *founding members of RAISA* and several other specialists who have contributed decisively to the association's activities in these ten years of activity had an informal meeting held in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere in November 2022. It was an opportunity to recall **RAISA**'s activities in this first decade of activity and draw future plans.

### References

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## About the author



**IOAN C. BACIVAROV** received the MSc in Electronics and Telecommunications (1971) - as Valedictorian and the PhD in Reliability Engineering (1978). He is a full Professor at the Electronic Technology and Reliability Department of POLITEHNICA University of Bucharest (UPB), Romania and Director of EUROQUALROM - ETTI Laboratory, beginning in 1996.

Dr **Ioan C. Bacivarov** was an *Invited Professor* at ETH Zurich, TIMA - National Polytechnical Institute Grenoble, University of Angers and University of Lisbon and a Visiting Professor at several universities from European

Union - including Erasmus University Rotterdam, ENSAM Paris, University of West Scotland, INP Grenoble, Polytechnical University of Catalunya a.o. (beginning with 1992).

Prof. **Ioan C. Bacivarov** is co-founder and President of the Romanian Association for Information Security Assurance - RAISA and coordinates the *International Journal of Information Security and Cybercrime - IJISC*. He is the President of NTC 144 ASRO - IEC "Dependability" and a member of the Directorial Boards of SRAC and RENAR. His teaching and research interests include quality and dependability (esp. reliability and safety/security), engineering and management, electronic technology, and cyber-security. He has published 25 books, more than 280 papers and coordinated 48 research projects in the above areas.

He is the Scientific Chairman of the *International Conference in Quality and Dependability - CCF*, organised in Romania (from 1992), Co-Scientific Chair of the *CyberCon Romania* conferences and a member of the Scientific Board of several international conferences in quality and dependability, including *ESREL*, *MMR*, *QUALITA*, *PSAM* a.o. He coordinated 24 workshops and symposia in the field of quality and dependability.

Dr **Ioan C. Bacivarov** is co-founder and Editor-in-Chief / Editor of several scientific journals, including *Asigurarea Calitatii - Quality Assurance*, *Quality - Access to Success*, *Optimum Q*, *Calitate-Fiabilitate-Metrologie*; he is/was Editor of several international prestigious scientific journals in the field including *Quality Engineering*, *Forum Qualit  Scientifique*, *Reliability Engineering & System Safety* and *Maintenance Management International* a.o.

In recent years, Prof. *Bacivarov* has focused on writing the history of electronics, quality and reliability in Romania and evoking important personalities in these fields.

Professor *I.C. Bacivarov* contributed to the development of higher education in technical universities from Romania in the field of quality and dependability in his capacity of international coordinator of the EU educational project TEMPUS JEP 11300-96 "EUROQUALROM" and as a coordinator of the postgraduate program of UPB in the field. He introduced 16 new courses and coordinated two new Master programs in quality and dependability at ETTI - UPB (*ICF* and *ICSFET*).



## Appendix



### Research / Development Projects

Start	End	Title	Description	Website
2022	2023	Fighting Crime and Corruption	Project developed by the <i>Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice with the help of the Romanian Association for Information Security Assurance</i> , funded by the <i>Justice Programme of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021</i> .	<a href="http://www.cyberlearning.ro">www.cyberlearning.ro</a>
2022	2023	Building a Network and a Learning Platform for Raising the Level of Cybersecurity	The project aims to build a network of students, cybersecurity experts, and organizations to analyze cybersecurity challenges and opportunities. Project developed by the Romanian Association for Information Security Assurance (RAISA) with the help of the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP).	<a href="http://www.cyberclub.ro">www.cyberclub.ro</a>
2021	2022	Strengthen Cybersecurity Education and Research for Preventing Cybercrime	The project goal is to strengthen cybersecurity education and to promote and disseminate cybersecurity research in Romania for preventing cybercrime. The project was developed by the Romanian Association for Information Security Assurance with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Romania.	<a href="http://www.cyberlearning.ro">www.cyberlearning.ro</a> and <a href="http://proceedings.cybercon.ro">proceedings.cybercon.ro</a>
2020	2021	Enhance Cyber Capacity Building in Romania for Preventing and Combating the Cybercrime Phenomenon	The project goal is to strengthen the cyber capacity in Romania by raising cybersecurity awareness and improving the skills of criminal justice authorities and the private sector in fighting cybercrime. The project was developed by the Romanian Association for Information Security Assurance with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Romania.	<a href="http://www.cyberlearning.ro">www.cyberlearning.ro</a>

Start	End	Title	Description	Website
2017	2019	Strategies for Monitoring the Online Platforms Security	Goal: Analyzing the strategies for monitoring the online platforms security and mitigating the cyber-attacks effects.	<a href="http://www.web-scan.eu">www.web-scan.eu</a>
2016	2017	Analysis of the Computer Networks Security. Architectures, Protocols, and Solutions	Goal: Analyzing the computer networks security and disseminating the main solutions to a web platform, for improving the cybersecurity culture.	<a href="http://www.securitatea-retelelor.ro">www.securitatea-retelelor.ro</a>
2014	2016	Studies on Modern Methods of Publishing Information in Online Environment	Goal: Studying the modern methods of publishing and promoting the information (web sites, wiki sites, blogs, social networks, cloud computing).	
2013	2014	Studies on Implementing Safety Measures to Ensure Information Security	Goal: Studying the best policies and security methods for computer systems and communications and disseminating them into an online platform to promote safety measures for information security.	<a href="http://www.securitatea-informatiilor.ro">www.securitatea-informatiilor.ro</a>
2013	2014	Protection of Computer Systems Against Cybercrime Phenomenon	Goal: Developing a platform for communicating important information regarding latest cyber-attacks and methods of protection against them to provide to the public effective methods to prevent and to combat the phenomenon of cybercrime.	<a href="http://www.criminalitatea-informatica.ro">www.criminalitatea-informatica.ro</a>
2013	2015	Implementation of IT&C Technologies in Online Education System	Goal: Developing an e-learning platform for the purpose to develop special training programs and perfecting the personnel involved in the management of electronic information (processing, management, security).	<a href="http://www.arasec.ro/elearning">www.arasec.ro/elearning</a>
2012	2013	Scientific Research Promotion in Information Security Field	Goal: Publishing a scientific journal for academic professorial staff, PhD students, researchers, graduate students and other professional categories in the field of information security and cybercrime.	<a href="http://www.ijisc.com">www.ijisc.com</a>



### Conferences, Special Sessions, and Events

Date	Title	Description	Website
Yearly, since 2022	CyberCon Romania International Conference	An annual event that aims to raise awareness, embody the cybersecurity culture, and share best practices in fighting cybercrime.	<a href="http://www.cybercon.ro">www.cybercon.ro</a>
May 27, 2021	Lessons learned from cybersecurity experts. Perspectives from Romania and the United States of America	This online event was organized by RAISA in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Romania and the Romanian National Computer Security Incident Response Team (CERT-RO). The aim of this event was to emphasize the importance of sharing best practices and relevant case studies for raising the level of awareness and embodies the cybersecurity culture.	<a href="http://www.cyberlearning.ro/cybersecurity-online-event/">www.cyberlearning.ro/cybersecurity-online-event/</a>
Yearly, since 2014	International Conference on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime (IC3)	An annual scientific conference that aims to encourage the exchange of ideas about evolution of cyberspace, information security challenges and new facets of the phenomenon of cybercrime.	<a href="http://proceedings.cybercon.ro">proceedings.cybercon.ro</a>
2012 - 2018	International IEEE Conference in Quality and Dependability - CCF	Organization and coordination of special sections / sessions <i>Dependability, Risk, Security</i>	<a href="http://ccf-quality-conference.com">ccf-quality-conference.com</a>

### Publications (Books, Journals, Studies, and Guides)

Year	Title	Description	Website
2021	Cybersecurity Guide	Guide developed with the help of the U.S. Embassy in Romania, the Romanian National Computer Security Incident Response Team (CERT-RO), and the National Association for Information Systems Security (ANSSI). <i>Authors: Iulian ALECU, Costel CIUCHI, Toma CÎMPEANU, Iulian COMAN, Larisa GĂBUDEANU, Ioan-Cosmin MIHAI, Cosmina MOGHIOR, Nelu MUNTEANU, Gabriel PETRICĂ, Ionuț STOICA, Cătălin ZETU</i>	<a href="http://www.raisa.org/documents/Cybersecurity-Guide.pdf">www.raisa.org/documents/Cybersecurity-Guide.pdf</a>
2020	Cybersecurity: Challenges and Perspectives in Education	Book developed with the support of the Romanian National Computer Security Incident Response Team	<a href="http://www.raisa.org/documents/CybersecurityEDU2020-EN.pdf">www.raisa.org/documents/CybersecurityEDU2020-EN.pdf</a>

Year	Title	Description	Website
		(CERT-RO) and the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research. <i>Coordinators: Ioan-Cosmin MIHAI, Costel CIUCHI, Gabriel PETRICĂ</i>	
2019	Considerations on Challenges and Future Directions in Cybersecurity	Study developed on the occasion of the Romanian Presidency at the Council of the European Union, with the support of the Romanian National Computer Security Incident Response Team (CERT-RO) and the National Cyberint Center within the Romanian Intelligence Service. <i>Coordinators: Ioan-Cosmin MIHAI, Costel CIUCHI, Gabriel PETRICĂ</i>	<a href="http://www.raisa.org/documents/CybersecurityRO2019.pdf">www.raisa.org/documents/CybersecurityRO2019.pdf</a>
2019	Dependability of Information Systems	The monograph “Dependability of Information Systems” is a complex and valuable approach on the concept of dependability (addressed in the synergy of its components – reliability, security, safety, availability, confidentiality, resilience, etc.), current and relevant keywords in the field of scientific research, both at national and international level. <i>Authors: Gabriel PETRICĂ, Sabina-Daniela AXINTE, Ioan C. BACIVAROV</i>	
2018	Current Challenges in the Field of Cybersecurity - Impact and Romania’s Contribution to the Field	This book aims to analyze the current challenges in cyberspace, identifying threats, vulnerabilities, and risks to cybersecurity. It is presented the evolution and structure of cyber-attacks, the best practices for cybersecurity measures, public-private cooperation and Romania’s capacity to respond to virtual threats at national, European and regional levels. <i>Authors: Ioan-Cosmin MIHAI, Costel CIUCHI, Gabriel PETRICĂ</i>	<a href="http://ier.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SPOS_2017_Study_4_FINAL.pdf">ier.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SPOS_2017_Study_4_FINAL.pdf</a>
2016	Web Programming. Applications in HTML, CSS, JavaScript	This book is useful to all those who wish to acquire basic knowledge on Internet programming. The book provides numerous practical examples of medium-advanced level of programming, tested on updated operating systems and modern browsers. <i>Authors: Angelica BACIVAROV, Costel CIUCHI, Gabriel PETRICĂ</i>	

Year	Title	Description	Website
2015	Challenges and Strategies for Cybersecurity	This book aims to present the concept of cybersecurity and to propose strategies and solutions to ensure it. Cyberspace, characterized by the absence of borders and anonymity, presents, besides the obvious benefits, a number of threats difficult to identify and counteract that can target the critical infrastructure of a state. <i>Authors: Ioan-Cosmin MIHAI, Gabriel PETRICĂ, Costel CIUCHI, Laurențiu GIUREA</i>	
2014	Information Security. Second Edition, Revised and Expanded	This book has the purpose to study security systems and to propose solutions to improve it, being a scientific portfolio, theoretical and practical, which is addressing equally to those with Master's degrees, doctoral or post-doctoral and to specialists in this field. <i>Authors: Ioan-Cosmin MIHAI, Gabriel PETRICĂ</i>	
2014	Cybercrime. Second Edition, Revised and Expanded	This book presents a complex study on cybercrime phenomenon, analyzing the current cyber-attacks. <i>Authors: Ioan-Cosmin MIHAI, Laurențiu GIUREA</i>	
2012	Internet Services	The aim of this book is to provide the readers with a bird's eye view on the Internet concept (aim, technical means, applications, and risks), addressing the various types of hardware technologies and specialized software protocols and tools. <i>Authors: Angelica BACIVAROV, Costel CIUCHI, Gabriel PETRICĂ</i>	
2012	International Journal of Information Security and Cybercrime (IJISC)	IJISC is a scientific peer-reviewed journal with a frequency of 2 issues/year, edited by professorial staff and experts from the University Politehnica of Bucharest and other universities from Romania and abroad. The principal aim of IJISC is to bring together the latest research and development in information security and the latest methods to prevent and to combat the cybercrime phenomenon.	<a href="http://www.ijisc.com">www.ijisc.com</a>

### Awards

Year	Title	Description
2022	Cyber Outstanding Security Performance Award (Cyber OSPA) 2022	The partnership between the U.S. Embassy in Romania and RAISA won the <i>Outstanding Cyber Security Partnership</i> category within the 2022 edition of Cyber Outstanding Security Performance Awards (Cyber OSPAs).
2021	Finalist at the Cyber Outstanding Security Performance Award (Cyber OSPA) 2021	The project Building a Network and a Learning Platform for Raising the Level of Cybersecurity was included in the Outstanding Cyber Security Training/Awareness Initiative category
2020	Outstanding Security Performance Award (OSPA)	The study “ <i>Considerations on Challenges and Future Directions in Cybersecurity</i> ” (2019) won the Outstanding Security Performance Award (OSPA) for the best Romanian cybersecurity initiative for 2020.