

ACHIEVING THE 2000 COMPLIANCE

Few people realise that many of the functions that computers and other technology undertake are dependent on date-critical information. When this information was originally programmed the Year 2000 wasn't always taken into account and years were often abbreviated, for example as '97' instead of '1997'.

Unfortunately, in these systems the Year 2000 becomes 00. This could lead to unpredictable results, false calculations or systems failures - which could have serious consequences for your business. The Year 2000 date change will impact upon many commonly used IT and non-IT items (please see the checklist). If your business, your customers, or your suppliers are not prepared for this change, your business could be seriously disrupted - at worst, you could be out of business altogether.

If you use any of these items, or your business relies on someone who does, you must act now:

	Yes	No
▪ Computer equipment (hardware and software)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Security and alarm systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Fax machines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Safes with time controls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Process control equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Programmable machinery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Video recorders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Telephone switchboard and equipment (not handsets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Lifts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Bar coding equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You may think that this problem is a long way off. It is not and it will not go away! The Year 2000 is only months away and getting closer.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

With careful planning and early action, there is no reason why your business cannot cope with the new millennium and become Year 2000 compliant.

There are three key steps:

1.	Decide on how you will tackle this task. Either take responsibility yourself or delegate it. Get your resources organised as soon as possible as delaying will only increase costs in the long run.
2.	Compile a complete and accurate inventory of all computer systems, date-dependent equipment and services used.
3.	Conduct a review to establish the degree of risk that is inherent to each inventory item. Everything should be regarded as ono-compliant unless proved otherwise.

In addition to initiating these essential steps, make sure you:

- contact your hardware and software suppliers, ask whether their products are Year 2000 compliant, what measures they took to achieve this, and the length of time they will remain compliant;
- use an environment which will not affect business as usual when testing systems with the date moved forward, because, without proper controls this could result in automatic deletion of information. Also check that your software licences will not expire;
- Check that your buyers and suppliers are also doing something about this issue, in order to ensure that your business activities won't be disrupted.

It is likely that your customer and suppliers may seek your assurance of Year 2000 compliance. Ultimately lenders including ourselves, will need to know that Year 2000 problems will not damage your business.

PATRICK MAUGHAN

email : maughan.patrick@fluxrisk.com

tel : 0032.2.725.11.79 - fax : 0032.2.725.17.47

FLUX RISK SERVICES SA

16 Av de la Sablière

1160 BRUSSELS - BELGIUM

<http://www.fluxrisk.com>