Roaring into the 2020s: Accelerating Solutions for Enterprise Security

By Charles Jennings
Chair, Swan Island Networks

Author, *Artificial Intelligence: Rise of the Lightspeed Learners* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019)

"The one thing we know for sure about the future," said business guru Peter Drucker, "is that it will be different." And the 2020s will be more different than ever.

Virulent wildfires, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes; civil disturbances, hot wars, trade wars; mass shootings, drug epidemics, new public health challenges; accelerating tech, cyberattacks, galloping automation. There will be no shortage of threats for the modern enterprise to be concerned about in the coming decade.

The good news is that a small group of tech vendors are now helping businesses acquire "24/7 situational awareness" of business-disrupting risks. Swan Island Networks is one of these companies helping customers achieve "intelligent resilience."

This emerging tech sector is changing the way corporate security groups, risk management leaders, and rank-and-file employees respond to immediate threats of all kinds. Almost certainly, this sector will play an increasingly important role in the 2020s. The faster the threat landscape changes, the more crucial it becomes to obtain and use real-time threat intelligence. Because seconds count when lives, property, reputation, and continuity of operations are at stake.

This white paper provides an overview of the situational awareness/intelligent resilience sector today—complete with compelling users' success stories. It also suggests why and how this sector will grow and add increasing value in the decade ahead.

The Law of Accelerating Returns

One reason the 2020s are likely to be a disruptive decade is because of something the tech industry calls the Law of Accelerating Returns. This theory, popularized by artificial intelligence guru Ray Kurzweil, states that once a technology gets rolling, its growth curve becomes exponential. Technology momentum builds upon itself, resulting in frog leaps, not mouse steps. Kurzweil's corollary: No matter how crazy fast you think tech change is today, know that it will never be this slow again.

Bad actors leverage the Law of Accelerated Returns like everyone else, continually putting newer, faster, better tech to work. Even natural world threats such as climate change and disease epidemics are heightened by accelerating technology (see the impact of blockchain in energy consumption, and that of global airliners on the proliferation of viruses.)

Enterprises need to put accelerating tech to work as well, to increase protection of their businesses, people, and assets. Artificial intelligence, AI, will no doubt play a central role in the acceleration of security-related intelligence collection and distribution in the 2020s. So much so that the security professionals whose job it is to protect the enterprise and assure its continuity will no longer have to search (i.e., google) for information about threats to their company; threat information will search for, and find, them—in increasingly precise and personalized ways. In fact, this is already happening.

Success Story #1: The Global Titan

A global 100 company has a mission-critical security operation in Long Beach, California. There, at its Security Operations Center (or SOC), a 24/7 team of security professionals works aggressively to thwart, or at least minimize, fast-breaking threats to their enterprise. Over the past several years, the biggest threats at their dozens of California facilities has been fire.

Wildfire season in California is now year-round. Today, this company's Long Beach SOC monitors "fire weather" alerts with geospatial precision, and distributes evacuation notices to employees in real-time. The SOC provides wildfire tower cam video feeds to company managers, delivers real-time evacuation routes for employees, and debunks false rumors about wildfires that do not exist.
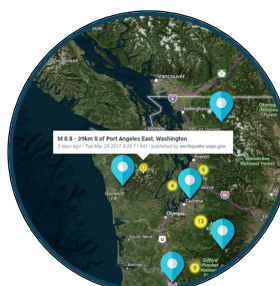
Using the software tools of intelligent resilience (in this case, Swan Island's TX360), this global giant has been able to minimize the impact of wildfires on its California operations, benefiting both the company and its people.

Intelligence Channels

Smart Alerts

Asset Monitoring

Dashboards

Features of the TX360 Platform

Success Story #2: The Luxury Mall

Recently, the security manager of a large Florida luxury mall was sitting at his computer, responding to email. Suddenly, an urgent notification popped up on his screen. This alert informed him a YouTube video was being streamed live by a mall customer, claiming an active shooter was onsite.

At the same moment, that customer was crouched behind a retail counter, videoing scenes of chaotic mall foot traffic, and telling everyone following him on YouTube that a man with a gun had entered the mall.

TX360's social media monitoring capability was able to inform the manager about this report of a potential shooting threat within seconds of its being posted. In the TX360 alert was a link to the customer's video stream on YouTube. The manager clicked the link, and saw that his mall was perhaps in trouble.

He learned of this potential emergency not through his own extensive video surveillance network, and not from a police bulletin. He learned about it from a state-of-the-art situational awareness service.

As it turned out, there was no gun, no shooter. But because he knew of the social media rumor almost immediately, the manager was able to prevent any serious disruption of his business environment.

The technology platforms provided by situational awareness industry vendors do two things: they collect real-time information about potential or actual real-world problems; and then filter and disseminate this information in increasingly intelligent, automated ways. Events are pinpointed on maps, social media are monitored, video streams are captured and displayed, smart alerts are sent according to personal alerting profiles. And more.

The challenge in the situational awareness tech sector is not capturing security or emergency data. With the rise of social media and crowd-sourcing; the emergence of an Internet of Things, with its billions of connected sensors; the proliferation of RSS news feeds; and the increasing sophistication of government data sharing—there is no shortage of information. The trick is to package it intelligently, and target it with care. Smart and flexible filtering is key to delivering valuable information.

In our experience at Swan Island, the "package" customers want most is timely, reliable email notification. In a structured format, with a short event description, and perhaps a map or set of related links. All coming from credible, reliable sources. Simple, but solid.

Above all, the alert package must be relevant to the recipient. No one wants to be fire-hosed with alerts about things that do not affect them. But getting precisely the right alert to the right person at the right time isn't easy. It takes time, customer feedback, and provide augmented intelligence.

Machines are getting better at alert targeting all the time, but at Swan Island we believe sharp human analysts are still an essential part of the mix. The interplay between smart AIs and intelligent humans is known within the artificial intelligence industry as "the other AI": Augmented Intelligence.

At our company, human analysts do constant calibration and fine tuning in support of precision alerting. See Success Story #3 to get an idea of how "the other AI" works at Swan Island.

Situational Awareness, 2030

In light of rising threats and the accelerating rate of technology change, we can expect to see a great deal of change within the situational awareness sector over the next decade.

Below is a list of some new features and capabilities we can expect to emerge by 2023:

• AI-driven incident forecasting services, which predict crimes and emergencies

• Intelligent video alerts that utilize AI and draw immediate attention to a situation without a human monitoring—saving precious seconds. Example: pinpointing a potential active shooter from a BOLO list of license plates and recognizing an assault style weapon being removed from the trunk

• Sensors that can track everything in real time at very low cost, allowing an exponential increase in awareness and response. Example: imagine knowing exactly where all your employees are when a major earthquake strikes

• Voice-activated and heads-up display technology for mobile security professionals that enables a bi-directional communications stream between them and they key people in the command center

• New "sensitive but anonymous" data sharing services using Confidential Computing (i.e., end-to-end encryption), enabling companies to share threat, vulnerability and incident data without these data ever being linked to them by name

Success Story #3: The Oil Company

The large international oil and gas company had signed up for a rather aggressive TX360 situational awareness pilot. The company's chief interests, in the beginning, related to executive protection and severe weather monitoring.

A Swan Island analyst was assigned the task of providing a brand monitoring service to the company as part of the pilot. While doing their daily caretaking of this brand-monitoring service, they noticed a social media post which had maliciously posted an IT administrator password to the oil company's internal network. The company was immediately alerted, and the password was changed before any damage was done.

360 degree threat awareness mean alerting customers about threats of whatever kind, from whatever source.

SWAN ISLAND NETWORKS

Success Story #4: Executives in Moscow

When a global multinational company had a group of key execs traveling In Moscow at the time of a national Russian election, unauthorized street protests were erupting throughout the city. These protests included clashes with police. They not only were creating massive traffic jams, but might also put these key executives in danger.

Using TX360's real-time alerting and mapping services, the executive protection team traveling with the execs was able to successfully avoid these spontaneous protests, and carry on their business in Moscow without disruption.
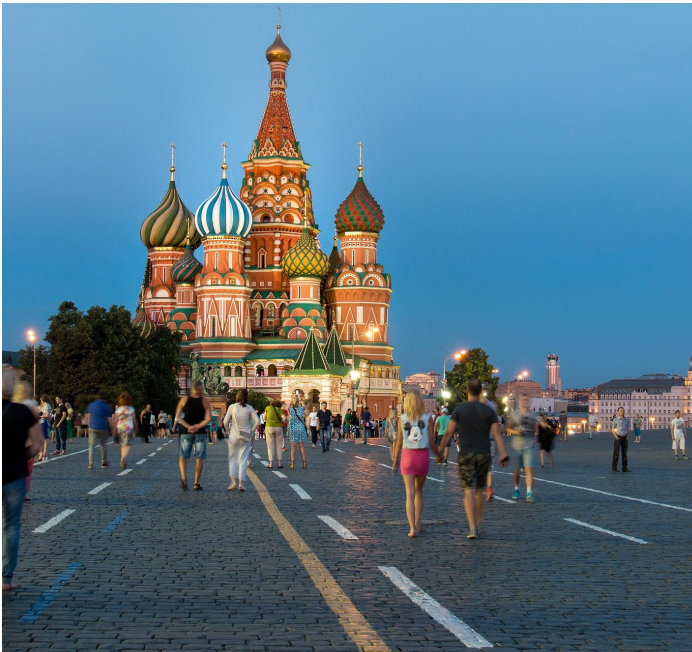
Summary

The 2020s will likely present a wide array and unprecedented number of critical threats to the enterprise. The sophistication and severity of these threats will often be unique. Companies should begin preparing for new 2020 threats now, by installing, growing and fine tuning situational awareness systems.

Swan Island has been a situational awareness leader for over a decade. We have America's largest and most important physical security company as our close partner. Still, our smart-alerting/SOC control panel solution is just one option. The situational awareness sector offers a number of valuable solutions.

One of our primary goals is to help grow the situational awareness/intelligent resilience sector, across the board. Security and emergency response in the 2020s will be a whole new ball game. A game where the stakes could not be higher. A robust situational awareness sector can help customers better protect company assets—from brands to facilities. And save lives.

For More Information

Take the next step in securing your enterprise by leveraging proactive threat monitoring technology. To find out more about how TX360 is helping clients protect their assets and reduce corporate risk, please visit:

https://www.swanislandnetworks.com/tx360platform

Schedule a TX360 demo today:

http://www.swanislandnetworks.com/request-live-demo