

Chapter 2

Definitions and Assumptions

In general this book is very OECD focused, and specifically UK, USA, and Europe centric. It discusses, in fairly broad terms, the shape the OECD and these countries are in to bounce back from damage to Critical Infrastructures. It looks specifically at the OECD because its constituents have the greatest reliance on a particular technology: telecommunications. Over 95% of the world's data traffic goes through the OECD.⁹ Such a figure has statistical significance; and defines an approach to life. This book is therefore also focused on Critical Information Infrastructure. It is impossible in a work such as this to review all the threats and potential challenges to such wide-ranging foundations of our modern society. However, it is possible to identify a number of common themes of relevance to each of the main areas. To start, however, we need a common understanding of what Critical Infrastructure and Critical Information Infrastructures are. This is surprisingly difficult, and one of the reasons there is some concentration in this book on the USA, UK, Australia, and New Zealand is because they have taken the definition and understanding of Critical Infrastructures further than most others in the OECD. There is the start of a common theme in the approaches of these countries.

Resilience has a number of meanings. It is therefore important to be clear from the outset what is meant by Resilience in this book. Some common definitions of Resilience¹⁰ are the following.

Resilience General Definition

Resilience generally means the ability to recover from (or to resist being affected by) some shock, insult, or disturbance. It is particularly, in this context, about being able to “bounce back” to an original form.

⁹ From data available at <http://www.oecd.org/oecddata> and <http://news.netcraft.com> (Accessed: 6 January 2007).

¹⁰ Definitions available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resilience>. (Accessed: 6 January 2007).

Resilience in Materials Science

Resilience in materials science is defined as the capacity of a material to absorb energy when it is deformed elastically and then, upon unloading, to have this energy recovered.

Resilience in Ecology

Resilience in ecology is about the following: The rate at which a system returns to a single steady or cyclic state following a perturbation or the magnitude of disturbance that can be absorbed before the system changes its structure by changing the variables and processes that control behavior.

Resilience in Psychology

Resilience in psychology describes the capacity of people to cope with stress and catastrophe.

Resilience in Business

Resilience in business is the ability of an organization, resource, or structures to sustain the impact of a business interruption, recover, and resume its operations to provide minimum services.

Resiliency

Resiliency is an American term that is gaining some credibility in Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Circles. In short it is most akin to “Resilience in Business” description above. However, it is also used as an American substitute for the word resilience.¹¹

Resilience in this Book

Resilience in this book means the ability, primarily, of the world’s north, western, and capitalist societies, summarized as the OECD, to withstand shocks to their critical infrastructures, including telecommunication infrastructures, without altering their basic form.

¹¹ Resiliency available at www.resiliency.com (Accessed: 6 January 2007).