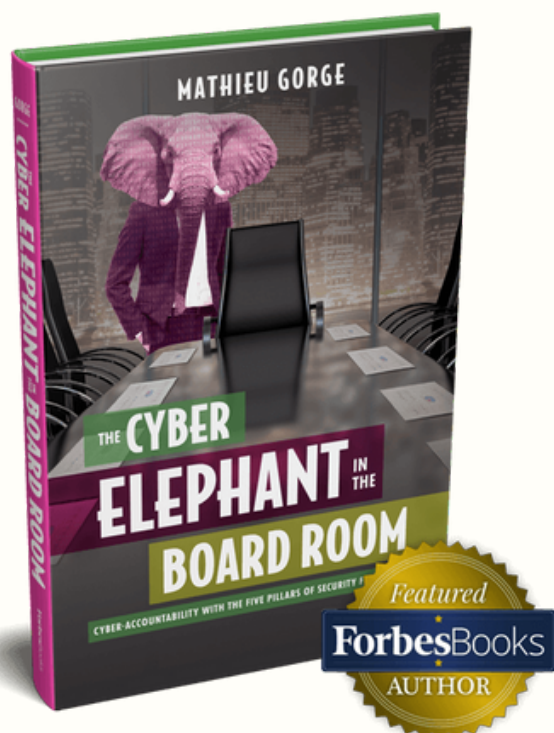


BOOK REVIEW

by **Jeffrey Dickinson**

With over 25 years of experience in the IT industry, I've built a career rooted in cybersecurity leadership, with a strong focus on the private and financial sectors. I currently serve as a Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), a role I've held for the past five years, where I lead efforts to protect critical systems and data in an increasingly complex threat landscape. My journey began in hands-on technical roles and evolved into leadership positions as I deepened my expertise and passion for cybersecurity and information security. I hold a bachelor's degree and more than 10 industry certifications, and I'm committed to continuous learning in this ever-changing field.

Outside of work, I'm an avid outdoors enthusiast. Whether it's hiking, fishing, off-roading, or traveling to remote places, I find inspiration and balance in nature. I also have a passion for astrophotography, capturing the night sky whenever I get the chance.



“For emerging cybersecurity leaders, the book serves as a powerful reminder that technical expertise must be paired with business acumen, clear communication, and the ability to influence stakeholders at the highest levels.”

What was your initial impression of The Cyber Elephant in the Boardroom? How did it align with or challenge your expectations about cybersecurity governance at the board level?

My initial impression of The Cyber Elephant in the Boardroom was that it offered a refreshing and much-needed perspective on the role of boards in cybersecurity governance. The book effectively challenges the common misconception that cybersecurity is solely a technical concern, highlighting the critical importance of board-level engagement in managing digital risk.

Rather than just presenting cybersecurity as an IT issue, the author stresses its significance as a core element of organizational strategy and governance. This approach aligns well with my expectations but also deepens the conversation by providing actionable insights into how boards can integrate cybersecurity into their decision-making processes, risk management frameworks, and long-term strategic goals.

Overall, the book pushes the envelope by urging boards to take a more proactive stance in cybersecurity, ensuring that these issues are fully embedded in the overall governance structure, rather than relegated to a narrow, technical domain.

How do you see the role of the CISO evolving based on the ideas presented in the book? Did it prompt you to rethink any part of your own leadership style or boardroom strategy?

Based on the ideas presented in The Cyber Elephant in the Boardroom, the role of the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) is clearly evolving into one of greater strategic influence and responsibility. The book emphasizes that CISOs are no longer just technical experts but must be seen as key advisors to the board, capable of translating complex cybersecurity issues into business risks and opportunities. Their role is increasingly positioned at the intersection of IT, risk management, and corporate governance.

What stood out to me was the idea that CISOs should be integral to executive discussions, helping shape organizational strategy by providing insights on how cybersecurity impacts overall risk profiles, business continuity, and stakeholder trust. This shift toward a more proactive, strategic role challenges traditional thinking, where CISOs were often siloed in operational tasks.

The book prompted me to reconsider the way I approach leadership within the boardroom, particularly in terms of ensuring that cybersecurity is not only discussed in isolated IT meetings but is woven into broader conversations about risk management and business strategy. It encouraged me to think more holistically about leadership, where the CISO's voice is crucial in aligning the board's priorities with the organization's cybersecurity posture, making it a shared responsibility across leadership rather than the responsibility of one department.

Were there specific concepts such as the 5 Pillars of Security Framework™ that you found especially useful or applicable to your work?

Yes, the 5 Pillars of Security Framework™ presented in The Cyber Elephant in the Boardroom was particularly insightful and highly applicable to my work. The framework's emphasis on the interconnectedness of people, processes, technology, governance, and risk management provides a comprehensive, holistic view of cybersecurity that is crucial for organizations aiming to align their security strategies with business objectives.

What I found especially useful is how the framework not only addresses the technical aspects of cybersecurity but also integrates the human and governance dimensions, which are often overlooked. By focusing on the importance of strong leadership, clear communication, and continuous education at all levels of the organization, the 5 Pillars of Security Framework™ provides a solid foundation for building a resilient, security-conscious culture.

This approach has significant relevance to my own work, particularly when advising clients on the need for board-level engagement in cybersecurity. It serves as a valuable tool to help align security priorities with business goals, ensuring that security is not a standalone concern but an integral part of the organization's overall risk management and operational strategy.

How does The Cyber Elephant in the Boardroom compare to other books or resources you've turned to for guidance in cybersecurity leadership?

The Cyber Elephant in the Boardroom distinguishes itself from other cybersecurity leadership resources by focusing on the critical role of boards and executive leadership in shaping an organization's cybersecurity strategy. While many books on cybersecurity tend to concentrate on the technical aspects or the operational side of security, this book provides a much-needed perspective on governance, risk management, and the strategic alignment of cybersecurity with broader business objectives.

What sets it apart is its emphasis on integrating cybersecurity discussions into the boardroom and positioning the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) as a key strategic partner in organizational decision-making. This approach adds a unique layer to the conversation, one that is often underrepresented in traditional cybersecurity literature.

Other resources I've turned to primarily offer frameworks for risk management or technical guidance for security professionals. While these are invaluable, The Cyber Elephant in the Boardroom complements them by addressing the critical need for board-level engagement and leadership buy-in, ensuring that cybersecurity is not just an IT concern but a core business priority. The book's practical insights and real-world examples make it particularly relevant for those in executive leadership roles looking to elevate their approach to cybersecurity governance.

If you were to recommend this book to an up-and-coming cybersecurity leader or a board member, what key takeaway would you highlight as most impactful?

If I were to recommend The Cyber Elephant in the Boardroom to an up-and-coming cybersecurity leader or a board member, the key takeaway I would highlight is the importance of elevating cybersecurity to a strategic business issue—one that demands active engagement from the board and executive leadership, not just IT.

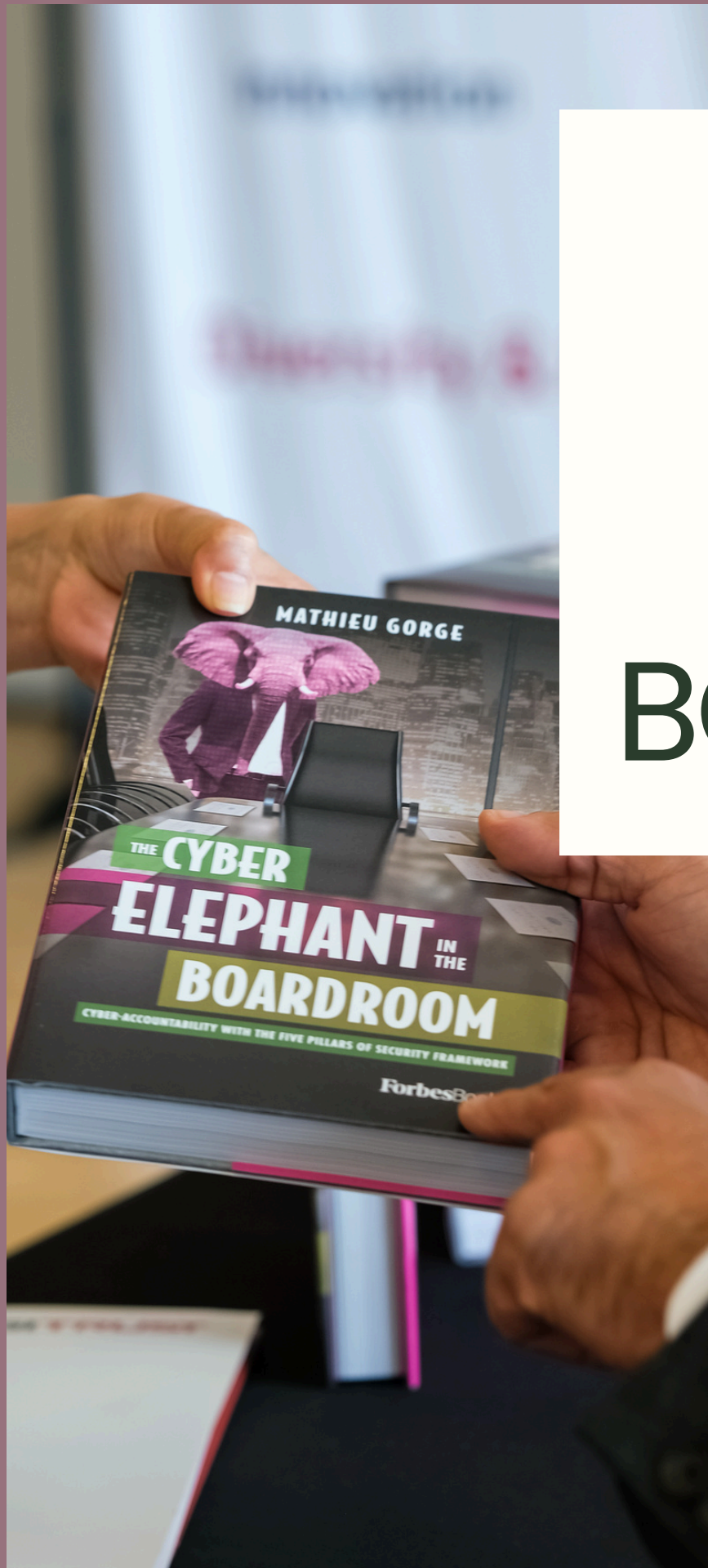
The most impactful message of the book is that effective cybersecurity governance requires collaboration, communication, and shared responsibility across all levels of leadership. It clearly illustrates how board members can and should play a proactive role in understanding cyber risk, asking the right questions, and supporting a culture of resilience.

For emerging cybersecurity leaders, the book serves as a powerful reminder that technical expertise must be paired with business acumen, clear communication, and the ability to influence stakeholders at the highest levels. It underscores the evolving role of the CISO as a strategic advisor—not just a technical authority.

This perspective is essential for anyone looking to lead effectively in today's threat landscape, where cybersecurity is inseparable from organizational success.



THE CYBER ELEPHANT IN THE BOARDROOM



AUTHOR



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Mathieu Gorge is the CEO and Founder of VigiTrust, a leader in Integrated Risk Management (IRM) SaaS solutions, serving clients in over 120 countries across various sectors. He advises CEOs and boards on cyber accountability, promoting practical cyber hygiene and compliance strategies. Creator of the 5 Pillars of Security Framework™, he adapts his approach to evolving regulatory and cybersecurity challenges. As a ForbesBooks author, innovator, and keynote speaker, Mathieu influences global cybersecurity discussions.

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