



Cybersecurity  
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# Behind the Keys:

Women Who Secure the Future

(In)Securities Special Edition: Day 6  
Featuring:

**Edna Conway**

*Celebrating International Women in Tech Day*

# Edna Conway



**Board Member | Global Chief Security & Risk Officer**



Edna Conway is a global leader with over 30 years of experience in cybersecurity, risk management, and digital transformation. She has held executive roles, including Chief Security & Risk Officer at Microsoft and Cisco, where she led innovative security strategies to protect billions in revenue. Edna has also advised top companies and VC funds, serving on over 12 boards, and providing strategic counsel to CEOs and governments worldwide. She is a recognised authority in security frameworks, influencing international standards, U.S. intelligence agencies, NATO, and NASA.

A passionate advocate for food security and the deaf community, Edna is known for her inclusive leadership and has been inducted into Fortune Most Powerful Women and the Global Cybersecurity Hall of Fame. She holds a J.D. from the University of Virginia, an A.B. from Columbia College, and certifications from Stanford, NYU, and MIT. In her free time, Edna enjoys rowing and marksmanship.

*Feature in (In)Securities- Special Edition- Day 6*



## **1. What inspired you to pursue a career in technology/cybersecurity, and how did you get started?**

My interest in technology grew from a keen curiosity about the intriguing solutions and services my clients were building and delivering when I was a few years out of law school and practising law. There was a natural immersion from there.

## **2. Can you describe a defining moment in your cybersecurity career that made you realise this was the right path for you?**

Partnering with government clients at the outset of the digital revolution reinforced my conviction that comprehensive security was essential to our daily lives moving forward.

## **3. Can you share some of the key challenges you faced as a woman in this field, and how you overcame them?**

Getting to know your ecosystem members (colleagues, co-workers, customers, suppliers, etc.) is essential to success. An even more important key is building trust. However, connections are often forged outside of a specific project or work-related environment.

Ensuring that colleagues could feel comfortable with and trust me was key. The techniques that have served me well include being direct, open, sharing personal insights, and deeply caring about the needs and success of those with whom I have the privilege to partner. Oh, and a healthy dose of humour is always disarming!



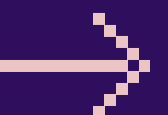
## **4. What are the biggest challenges women face in the technology/cybersecurity industry today? Can you share specific examples from your own experiences?**

While barriers are crumbling today, balancing the need to ensure that we are heard and included while still being perceived as a “team player” remains an area for continued focus. Particularly for those who lean more toward the introvert scale, asking for inclusion in projects, nominating yourself for speaking engagements, and asking to be paid for your expertise seem to be large hurdles.

Learning how to ask, using your voice with power, and pointing out with humour when you are being dismissed or forgotten go a long way toward continuing our journey in this field.

## **5. How has the industry evolved for women since you started your career? Have you noticed any significant shifts, and can you share a personal story that illustrates these changes?**

There are more women! In addition, we now have quite a few of us who are now “seasoned” in the field and can share insights, pitfalls, and wisdom, and, moreover, are eager to serve as mentors and sherpas for others.



## **6. What role do diversity and inclusion play in fostering innovation in tech/ cybersecurity? Can you share a personal example or case study where diversity directly led to innovation within your team or project?**

Embracing diversity of thought and diversity of educational and experiential background enables a wider aperture of visibility to the risks and solutions which make technology and cybersecurity such a dynamic and critical career path.

For me, many years ago, my legal background, government work, and rich experience in ICT supply chains enabled me to be the first to meaningfully address Third Party/Supply Chain security with a comprehensive architecture that helped not only the company for whom I had the privilege of working but served all in our industry ecosystem.

That led to an innovative first-ever ISO standard addressing the risk of counterfeit and taint in ICT software and hardware (ISO 20243).

## **7. What are the most exciting trends or developments in the industry right now that you're passionate about?**

I am deeply focused on public-private collaboration to meaningfully address Digital Concentration Risk.

We also have a unique opportunity to converge ML, Gen AI/NLP, and Quantum capabilities to truly enhance our digital and physical lives and apply uniform security and accuracy guardrails to deliver that enhancement with safety.



## **8. What advice would you give to young women considering a career in technology or cybersecurity?**

Just go play and see what interests you. We live in a time with unprecedented learning opportunities, far broader and more flexible than traditional educational paths.

## **9. Can you share examples of initiatives or programs that have made a real difference in promoting women in our field?**

There are numerous organisations that support our growth, including the Executive Women's Forum, Cyversity, WiCYS, and WITI, to name a few.

## **10. If you could envision the ideal future for women in cybersecurity, what would it look like? What key changes would have been made?**

The ideal future would not only embrace but affirmatively seek out diversity of thought and background, ensuring an open and welcoming playing field. Key changes would include:

- Balanced parity within multi-gender STEM programs in early and secondary education, enabling natural growth of comfort in working across genders on joint projects; and
- Increased flexibility in employment, accommodating the needs of women and men caretakers at various stages throughout life.