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Aiding South West Fire And Rescue Achieve Their Information Security Goals

The five Fire and Rescue Services in the South West of England are collaborating in the Secure Information Interchange Programme - a programme of work to improve information security and facilitate the sharing of information with their external partners to improve community safety.

The Challenge

The Public Services Network (PSN) Code of Connection and the Cabinet Office Security Policy Framework (a framework that outlines standards, best practice guidelines and approaches to protecting UK Government assets) require organisations to have implemented a protective marking system. The five South West FRS's, who hold a great deal of personal information on vulnerable and high-risk people, agreed to implement the HMG Protective Marking Scheme and concluded that full compliance could not be achieved by policy and training alone, but required a system to force staff to protectively-mark the documents that they create.

The tight management and control over access and dissemination of information residing in emails, documents, file stores and across intranets & extranets was a core requirement to enable South West FRS to gain SPF accreditation.

South West FRS's vision was to provide timely, secure and cost effective sharing of information between Fire and Rescue Services and their partners to improve the safety of the community. This, combined with the fact that there was no uniform information security procedure in force across the FRS resulted in the decision to adopt a software solution.

> We were impressed with the Boldon James solution because it was easy to use and easy to administrate and manage. Boldon James was also extremely flexible on licensing.
>
> Graham Saunders,
> Programme Manager,
> Dorset Fire and Rescue Services

The Solution

South West FRS had specified that the solution should integrate tightly and seamlessly with Microsoft Office, Lotus Notes, Microsoft SharePoint and support mobile devices. Equally importantly, explained Graham Saunders, the solution had to force all end-users to use and specify the HMG Protective Marking security classification of information.

"Although we accepted that training would be necessary to achieve rapid adoption across the FRS, the solution had to be easy-to-use, intuitive and provide comprehensive help screens as we did not want our staff to have any issues or problems," said Graham Saunders. "Ease of administration and management was also a key requirement, as was the ability to roll out the solution in phases to end-user groups, and full support during core business hours."

South West FRS stakeholders evaluated several proposals before deciding to partner with Boldon James. "We were impressed with the Boldon James solution because it was easy-to-use, administer and manage," added Graham Saunders.

Working closely with South West FRS stakeholders and the IT departments, Boldon James installed and implemented Email Classifier, Office Classifier, OWA and SharePoint Classifier. "These four products provide comprehensive management and control over the access and release of information sources from emails, Microsoft Office documents and SharePoint content, putting labelling at the heart of the data loss prevention strategy by giving users the ability to apply relevant visual labels," explained Martin Sugden. "They also allow South West FRS to enforce compliance with HMG Protective Marking security classification and conformance to the Cabinet Office Security Policy Framework."

> In recognition of its best-practice work, South West FRS's Secure Information Interchange Programme won the SC Magazine European Information Security Project of the Year Award 2013.

Conclusion

All five members of South West FRS have rolled out Boldon James solutions and are successfully achieving the fundamental objectives of the programme: the accreditation and connection of the FRS participants to the PSN, improved information security, compliance with the CFOA Protective Security Framework and the secure, timely and cost effective sharing of information between the FRS and its external partners. The Boldon James solutions are giving South West FRS the confidence that its information systems will protect the information they handle and its external partners the assurance that any information they share with the FRS will be stored and handled appropriately.

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