

SOUTH WEST FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES TURN TO BOLDON JAMES TO HELP ACHIEVE THEIR SECURE INFORMATION EXCHANGE GOALS



SUMMARY

- ▶ Customers: Avon, Devon & Somerset, Cornwall, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services
- ▶ Requirement: Protective marking of e-mail, documents and SharePoint-sourced information, to help meet the conditions for connection to the Public Services Network and compliance with the CFOA Protective Security Framework
- ▶ Solution: Boldon James Email Classifier, Notes Classifier, Office Classifier, OWA Classifier and SharePoint Classifier

CUSTOMER STORY: SOUTH WEST FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

The Customer

The five Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) 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 increase community safety.

The Challenge

The Public Services Network (PSN) Code of Connection and the Cabinet Office Security Policy Framework (SPF) outlines standards, best-practice guidelines and approaches to protecting UK Government assets and requires organisations to have implemented a protective marking system. The five South West FRSs 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. A number of other Fire and Rescue services had attempted to implement protective marking solutions to manage and control access to this information, but these purely manual solutions tended to focus on national and regional resilience planning, where most documents were classified and sent to the FRS in paper format and did not extend to other datasets.

South West FRS had already engaged a local supplier to provide information security awareness

“We were impressed with the Boldon James solution because it was easy-to-use, administer and manage. Boldon James was also extremely flexible on licensing.”

*Graham Saunders,
Programme Manager, South
West Fire and Rescue Services*



The Challenge (cont..)

training, including protective marking, physical security, the Data Protection Act and good practice processes and procedures. “FRS holds personal information on vulnerable and high-risk people and we have to protect this information, as its loss or release to unauthorised personnel would affect credibility and trust with other services as well as with the public,” commented Graham Saunders, South West FRS Programme Manager.

“Although the training helped participants understand why they were being asked to handle information in certain ways, it didn’t help them do it uniformly or enforce it for them.”

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.

“South West FRS recognised that it needed to partner with a highly-experienced and specialist organisation if it was to achieve PSN compliance and SPF accreditation and realise real and measureable improvements in its services across the community,” explained Martin Sugden, Boldon James CEO.

The Solution

South West FRS had specified that the solution should integrate tightly and seamlessly with Microsoft Office, Lotus Notes, Microsoft SharePoint and also support mobile devices. Equally importantly, explained 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 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 Saunders.

Working closely with South West FRS stakeholders and IT departments, Boldon James implemented Email, Office, OWA and SharePoint Classifier. “These four products provide comprehensive management and control over the access to and release of information

via 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.”

“Accreditation has helped to make information security a priority for the Service. It has helped to identify our gaps, ensure we have the resources and structures in place to implement improvements and embed this across the organisation in a short space of time - things we could not have achieved alone in the timescales.”

*Vikki Shearing, Accreditor,
Dorset Fire and Rescue
Services*

The Benefits

All five members of South West FRS have rolled out Boldon James Classifier 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 CFA Protective Security Framework
- 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. As well as reducing the risk of the FRS breaching the Data Protection Act, the solutions have also encouraged the FRS to critically review its information systems, their value to the business and who has access to the data. This potentially provides an opportunity to reduce IT infrastructure and administration costs and ensure that the FRS gets maximum benefit from the information held and processed.

"The programme of work leading to accreditation has provided us with a comprehensive set of tools and policies to ensure that all our sensitive information is appropriately safeguarded and staff are aware of their responsibilities for managing information," said John Aldridge, Deputy Chief Officer, Wiltshire FRS. "This, in turn will allow us to share information with our partners to enable us to provide a more effective service to vulnerable people in our communities. The increased level of security, provided through this South West collaboration project, will improve the Fire Service's operational response capabilities and may save lives in the long run."



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

About Boldon James

For almost 30 years, Boldon James has been a leader in Secure Information Exchange software, helping organisations of all sizes manage sensitive information securely and in compliance with legislation and standards, in some of the most demanding messaging environments in the world.

Our Classifier product range extends the capabilities of Microsoft core infrastructure products to allow users to apply relevant visual & metadata labels (protective markings) to messages and documents in order to enforce information assurance policies, raise user awareness of security policies and orchestrate multiple security technologies.

Our customers range from commercial businesses to Government, Defence & Intelligence organisations and we are a Microsoft Global Go-To-Market Partner and a Gold ISV. Boldon James is a wholly-owned subsidiary of QinetiQ, a FTSE 250 company, with offices in the UK, US, Australia and Europe and channel partners worldwide.