

Blackthorn supports the Ministry of Defence in keeping information safe

Case study

Industry sector
Defence

Challenge
Requirement to manage and track the response to information security breach incidents across the MOD.

Solution
Blackthorn provides a centralised repository for all incident information and supports each stage of follow-up activity.

Benefits
Detailed reporting improves visibility of incident information across the organisation. Analysis of key issues enables the MOD to improve security.

With the threat of terrorist activity always in the news, the efficiency with which the Ministry of Defence (MOD) responds to information loss incidents is more critical than ever. To help it manage and contain security breaches, it decided to implement Blackthorn – increasing the effectiveness of follow-up activity, and helping the MOD to protect sensitive information.

Whenever an information security breach involving personnel from any defence service in the UK occurs, it is the members of the Joint Security Coordination Centre (JSyCC) who manage the MOD's response. Examples of such incidents include leaving a laptop on a train, losing a CD sent in the post, or sending an email containing restricted information on a non-restricted network.

Centralised database

Without a centralised database to track follow-up activity, staff had poor visibility of incidents across different departments. This made it time-consuming to satisfy requests for incident statistics made by journalists under the Freedom of Information Act. It was also difficult to pinpoint key problems areas and improve policies accordingly.

"We wanted to be able to report on overall trends so that we could advise on proactive measures that would improve information security across the MOD," comments Lt Col Paul Schwartz, SO2 Operations Support at JSyCC.

JSyCC conducted a thorough review of available software to find an appropriate solution. Blackthorn was selected as it met the team's technical requirements – such as providing extensive reporting features and safeguarding data integrity. "It also had an excellent reputation within other MOD departments where it is already implemented," adds Schwartz.

Efficient response

Now, when an information security breach incident is reported, the team at JSyCC follow a pre-defined workflow within Blackthorn. Supported by the software, tasks must be completed ensuring that all necessary steps are taken to minimise the impact of the incident, and that key agencies within the MOD are informed as appropriate. As each task is closed, an incident log is automatically updated in Blackthorn and cannot be altered.



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Lt Col Paul Schwartz, SO2 Operations Support, Joint Security Coordination Centre, Ministry of Defence

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QCC has worked closely with JSyCC to ensure that the solution meets its precise needs. Key areas of collaboration include tailoring the solution to enable automatic transfer of data submitted about each incident on e-questionnaires, as well as providing training to new members of the JSyCC team.

“QCC's approach is very personal and extremely responsive,” remarks Schwartz. “We have excellent relationships with the team there and they are great to work with.”

Decision-making support

Having all incident information in one central repository has dramatically reduced the time it takes for the JSyCC team to produce reports. “Before, it could take days to compile key security breach statistics,” confirms Schwartz. “Now, we can deliver a report in minutes.”

As well as improving the effectiveness of follow-up activity, increased visibility of incidents across the organisation also enables staff to analyse and identify key issues. By pinpointing areas where there are lots of security breaches, JSyCC is able to make recommendations about how the situation can be improved – either through training or the introduction of new policies.

“Blackthorn is supporting decisions that improve security,” explains Schwartz. “In this way, it is helping us to protect our sensitive information and ensuring it doesn't fall into the wrong hands.”

Framework for future collaboration

In future, JSyCC is looking to refine its use of Blackthorn further by implementing survey functionality that will enable staff to tailor questionnaires to fit the needs of individual cases. Blackthorn is already used in the MODCERT Control Centre which manages information technology risks such as computer virus attacks, and the MOD is also looking at extending Blackthorn to other areas.

“The solution will continue to play an important role in enabling us to improve collaboration to minimise security breaches,” concludes Schwartz. “Using Blackthorn, we can work more closely with our defence colleagues – both within the MOD and potentially in outside agencies in the UK and overseas.”

About Blackthorn

Blackthorn is an out-of-the-box solution for managing all activities related to sensitive operations and issues.

It's a straightforward and highly secure approach to integrating key functions within your business into a single, coherent database of information that can give true clarity on operational risk.

Further information

To find out more about Blackthorn, contact us now on blackthornmail@qccis.com or +44 (0)20 7353 9000.



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This case study illustrates how one QCC customer uses the 'Blackthorn' technology. Many factors have contributed to the results and benefits described in this case study. QCC does not guarantee comparable results. All information contained herein was provided by the featured customer. QCC does not attest to its accuracy.

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