

Hamilton Osborne King



Leading Irish property agent Hamilton Osborne King prevents commercially sensitive data from getting into the wrong hands

Company background

Hamilton Osborne King is Ireland's leading commercial property agent, with a turnover of 35 million in 2005. Headquartered in Dublin, Hamilton Osborne King also has offices in Cork and Belfast, an associated office in Limerick and a total staff of 240. The company operates in both the commercial and residential sectors and prides itself on its high standard of customer service.

The challenge

As the market leader in commercial property in Ireland, Hamilton Osborne King is privy to a significant amount of commercially sensitive data. Information on property prices, as well as confidential client and contact records, are stored on its IT systems. Hamilton Osborne King's existing IT infrastructure provided a standard level of network security, but the management team felt a need to enhance its IT security provision in the wake of increased concern over potential security breaches.

The company was particularly concerned about the potential security threat posed by the increasing proliferation of USB memory sticks, which can be used to download confidential data from company networks. Kevin Gregory, Associate, Senior Business and IT Manager at Hamilton Osborne King, summed up

the situation as follows: "We felt that the increasing use of USB devices left our business potentially vulnerable and we wanted to act on this, but we also wanted to strike a balance between safeguarding commercially sensitive information and facilitating the day-to-day running of the agency".

The agency also felt that a more robust security solution would ensure that all the requirements of the Data Protection Act were being met.

Selecting a solution

Hamilton Osborne King conducted a thorough review of the various options available for controlling access to company networks via peripheral devices such as USB memory sticks. The company wanted a flexible solution that would allow nominated staff – typically senior managers - to make use of USB devices to carry presentations to clients and to carry documents around to different Hamilton Osborne King branches. At the same time, it wanted peace of mind that unauthorised users would not be able to take advantage of an unmanned PC and download confidential documents. After looking at solutions from companies including SecureWave and, Hewlett-Packard, Hamilton Osborne King selected SecureWave's Sanctuary Device Control because of its inherent flexibility and its easy-to-use interface.

Gregory said of the selection process: "We chose SecureWave's Sanctuary Device Control because it gave us the flexibility to allow nominated staff to access specific files and applications on the network with their USB memory sticks. It was the only solution that offered us the granularity of control we needed. Other products seemed to be

all or nothing – you could grant access to all users or to none. We also liked Sanctuary Device Control's intuitive user interface, which makes the solution easy to install, easy to modify and easy to support".

Gregory added: "Add all this to the help and consultancy we received from SecureWave reseller VigiTrust and the decision was a given".

The roll-out

Hamilton Osborne King began rolling out Sanctuary Device Control at the beginning of January 2006, following internal agreement on the company's revised security policy. Sanctuary Device Control was installed on a non-dedicated Windows server in a locked room and software clients were pushed out to 130 users at Hamilton Osborne King's commercial headquarters over a period of four weeks.

Kevin Gregory commented: "The first phase of the deployment of Sanctuary Device Control has gone smoothly. There have been no technical problems with the deployment and the senior managers at our headquarters – whose buy in we needed for this deployment to be successful - have endorsed the solution as one which allows them the flexibility they require without compromising company security".

Hamilton Osborne King plans to roll out Sanctuary Device Control to the commercial property branches in Cork and Belfast in March 2006, and to deploy the solution to the residential side of the business after that. On completion, Sanctuary Device Control will have been deployed to all 240 employees.

The benefits

According to Gregory, “Senior managers in our company regularly use USB memory sticks in their day-to-day work, which meant that we needed to embrace these devices as an integral part of our IT strategy. At the same time though, we wanted to lock down our PCs to ensure that we weren’t an easy target for potential security breaches. Because Sanctuary

works by defining an ‘allowed’ list of devices that are permitted access to the network and denying all else, we have been able to ensure that our senior managers have access to the data they need in a controlled and manageable way, while blocking unauthorised access attempts”.

Gregory sums up: “Deploying Sanctuary Device Control has given us peace of mind that our commercially

sensitive data is secure, meaning that the risk of our directors being liable for any information leaks is minimal. The decision to invest in Sanctuary Device Control was an easy one – we simply compared the cost of purchasing and deploying the software with the financial and reputational risk to the business of being a victim of a security breach”.



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