

Case Study: GuardianEdge Helps California Department of Health Solve HIPAA Compliance Issue

The California Department of Health (CDHS) implemented Encryption Plus Hard Disk software from GuardianEdge Technologies to protect confidential health information in accordance with privacy and security regulations set forth in HIPAA. Advanced planning was a key factor in the success of the encryption implementation program at CHDS, which positioned the department as a compliance model for other state agencies.

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The Issue: Protected Health Information on Unprotected Laptops

The California Department of Health (CDHS) is a government agency whose mission is to protect and improve the health of all Californians. As one of the largest government agencies in California, CDHS employs more than 5,000 people and administers a broad range of public and clinical programs that provide health care services to citizens throughout the state.

In the administration of its programs, CDHS maintains more than 60 field offices and frequently collaborates with other state agencies, as well as hospitals, clinics, health plans, local health jurisdictions and community-based organizations. As such, many CDHS employees rely on laptop computers to store medical records and other protected health information (PHI). The theft or loss of even one of these laptops could compromise thousands of medical records, leaving patients vulnerable to ID theft and other forms of fraud.

The Solution: Encryption Plus Hard Disk

As a health care services provider, CDHS is committed to safeguarding the privacy and security of PHI in accordance with the rules set forth in HIPAA. The department quickly determined that it needed to protect the laptops under its control in order to maintain HIPAA compliance and avoid potential exposure of confidential patient information.

While HIPAA does not explicitly require the use of encryption technology, CDHS recognized that data encryption was the most effective way to protect their laptops. During the second quarter of 2005, CHDS developed a strategic program to implement a data encryption software solution across the department. After a 60-day evaluation process, CDHS selected Encryption Plus[®] Hard Disk from GuardianEdge Technologies and executed an aggressive strategy to encrypt nearly 2,000 laptops in a single month.

Requirements & Challenges

Strong security was the first and foremost requirement for CDHS in selecting a data encryption software product. Encryption Plus Hard Disk was ideal in this regard because it applies full volume encryption to computer hard drives, protecting all documents, applications, system files and data fragments.

Smooth deployment was another key requirement for CHDS. In order to avoid confusion and downtime for their end users, the CDHS implementation team had put considerable effort into the development of a configuration script for Microsoft SMS that would

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completely automate the deployment process. As such, full support for remote deployment via SMS was an absolute must-have feature for CDHS.

Encryption Plus Hard Disk fully supports remote deployment using SMS, Tivoli, Altiris and many other enterprise-grade desktop management tools. The software was also ahead of the competition in its support for Windows 2000 and XP, ensuring that it would install properly on all CDHS laptops.

Deployment Experience

CDHS put significant effort and resources into the implementation planning process in order to ensure a smooth, rapid deployment across the department while maximizing user acceptance of the new security measures. As Tim Schoenhardt, Senior Programmer Analyst and project lead for the department's encryption program implementation team notes, "This was perhaps the most significant part of our deployment effort, taking out all guesswork or ambiguity for users."

Before deploying Encryption Plus Hard Disk to their user base, the DHS team tested various configurations to optimize the deployment process. CDHS engineers invested two weeks in designing and testing various scripting options. A Professional Services team from GuardianEdge Technologies was also on site, making enhancements to the software for deployment across the CDHS environment.

The intense planning efforts paid off. The implementation began on June 22, three weeks after CDHS officially selected Encryption Plus Hard Disk. During the next three weeks, the implementation team was able to encrypt 1,300 laptops, and by August 11, CDHS had successfully encrypted 1,700 computers with Encryption Plus Hard Disk.

Results: The Proactive Approach Pays Off

For CDHS, the timing of their encryption implementation program was ideal. In November 2005, the California Department of Finance, which is responsible for the state's (IT) security policies and activities, issued an encryption mandate to all state agencies and departments in California.

Since CDHS had already encrypted their laptops in a programmatic fashion, they were able to avoid a reactive approach that would have distracted them from other priorities. What's more, the department's early adoption of encryption technology positioned them as a Best Practices leader for information security, and as a compliance model for other agencies and departments across the state.

"We're pleased that we made the decision to encrypt last year. We're ahead of the game on that one," says Schoenhardt.

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About Encryption Plus Hard Disk

Encryption Plus Hard Disk provides strong full disk encryption for corporate PCs running the Windows operating system. Simple to deploy, manage and use, this data protection software solution encrypts all data stored on a computer hard drive, including applications, temporary files and the operating system itself. Businesses and government agencies alike use on Encryption Plus Hard Disk to protect sensitive information and achieve compliance with data security and privacy regulations.

About GuardianEdge Technologies

GuardianEdge Technologies is a market leader in reducing the cost and complexity of enterprise data security. Nearly 2 million users around the world depend on GuardianEdge solutions to protect highly confidential information and to comply with data privacy and security regulations.

An enterprise encryption pioneer, GuardianEdge was founded more than 20 years ago and serves such clients as Lockheed Martin Corporation, Deutsche Bank AG and Humana Inc., as well as numerous federal government agencies, including the US Department of Veteran's Affairs.

For more information about GuardianEdge Technologies, visit our corporate Web site at www.guardianedge.com.

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