

Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospital NHS Trust, trust PC Guardian's anti-theft solution



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The Customer:

Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospital NHS Trust is one of the largest NHS teaching trusts in the UK with a reputation for excellent staff who provide high quality care from three hospital sites in and around Birmingham. The Trust which was established in April 2002 employs more than 6,500 staff, has approximately 1200 beds and serves a population of over 500,000.

The Challenge:

PriceWaterhouseCoopers' Information Security Breaches Survey 2004 reported that "One in ten businesses had computers stolen in the last year." In the 2006 report, it stated: "Almost all UK businesses (92% overall and 98% of large businesses) have some computers (e.g. desktop and laptops) that are not within the main data centre or computer room. Half of these rely solely on the physical security of their premises to protect these computers."

Reports in the press of confidential and critical medical data falling into the public domain posed a serious threat. Mohammed Irfan of the Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust was very aware of the wider implications beyond the capital loss of any hospital computers if they were stolen.

Data encryption plays a large part in an organisation's security policy, ensuring that data is secure and only accessible by authorised personnel, but if a computer is not physically secured as well, there is still a risk. The cost of replacing the hardware and the downtime associated adds an additional cost in both time and money to a Trust's budget. The challenge was to find a cost-effective first line of defence to stop any hardware theft in the first instance.

The Solution:

Mohammed made the decision to purchase anti-theft products in conjunction with an upgrade programme which would replace all desktop computers within the Trust and chose PC Guardian products to 'Nail Down' their computers.

Distributed in the UK by Avanquest Solutions, PC Guardian locks are known and trusted by organisations like the NHS to provide protection against the theft and loss of desktop computers, laptop computers, computer peripherals, and other assets like LCD projectors and video equipment.

Dealing initially with the desktop requirement, the Trust purchased 2,250 Perma Dome Desktop Security kits from Avanquest, which Mohammed holds 'in store', ready to be issued with every new computer that is installed. As with all PC Guardian anti-theft devices, the Perma Dome Desktop security kit features flexible keying options, including master keying systems, which are widely adopted as corporate standards.

Mohammed's practical tip to anyone rolling out physical security of this nature on a large scale is "Glue ahead of time - it is much easier to do this in an office or lab rather than at someone's desk!"

Any equipment that has a security slot is able to be secured using a cable lock. The range of locks, from simple keyed cables to pre-set combination locks allows users the flexibility to determine how keys should be assigned to



the locks used by their organisations. For instance, clients can order a unique key for each lock, 'keyed differently', or opt for a single 'keyed alike' solution that will fit all the locks in an organisation. In addition, 'master keyed' systems, which offer maximum security while simplifying key management and administration are also available.

Going forward, Mohammed is assessing the requirement for PC Guardian's range of Notebook Guardian cable locks for use with laptops and other hardware. With an ever increasing mobile workforce, the use of laptop computers in disparate locations is rising, with the need for physical security moving beyond the office location.

Again from PriceWaterhouseCoopers' Information Security Breaches Survey 2006, it said "After a spate of laptop losses and thefts, a publishing company now charges laptop costs directly to the managers responsible for that area of the business."

The Benefits:

Mohammed comments that

"Although we had no statistics on the loss of equipment before using the locks, we were aware of things going missing, but since PC Guardian's Perma Dome Desktop Security locks kits have been introduced, there has not been one report of anything having gone astray."

