

# GET PROTECTION

Part 3

In which we look at security for the home and mobile worker.

The old saying goes that an Englishman's home is his castle. A newly installed, poorly equipped and generally naïve first time home worker might turn this old wisdom over in their pea brain and think, 'Ah, my castle. How safe I am from the world of sabotage and general banditry'. Of course, this person is a fool. Show me a castle that hasn't been sacked and I'll show you a land not worth conquering.

"There is a temptation for those that work from home and/or on a mobile basis to be lax about security," wisely intones HSM's UK sales manager, Barry Robbins. "Often, computers are

not protected by the same firewalls and anti-spyware systems that those in an office might sit behind. Also, as we are encouraged to recycle, papers are now disposed of separately and so there is a higher opportunity for confidential and sensitive documents to fall into the wrong hands. It is easier to sort through a pile of papers, magazines, newspapers etc than through a pile of general household waste."

Robbins has positioned the dots, now allow me to join them. The easiest way for a home worker to comprehend the level of insecurity they now face is to realise that all the security >>

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that their old 'proper' office used to enjoy they now have to employ to their own homes. We're not suggesting panic rooms and Monty Burns' style fleets of attack hounds, but a level of security that is, quite literally, the business.

A prime area of vulnerability is the confidential data that is necessary for you to operate as a business. Two things need to happen with this data – some of it is for the keeping and the rest is for the shredding. While there is something hypnotic and undeniably dramatic about watching an important document singe under a delicate candle flame and slowly brown, curl and catch, it's more suited to a medieval love affair than the hyper-fast modern business world of today.

Robbins recommends a shredder, and argues for a higher level of security than strip cut ground zero.

"If someone is working from home, then there will probably be a higher volume of confidential waste that needs to be disposed of," he says. "In certain circumstances, a higher level of security may be required. However, an individual's credit / debit card details are as sensitive as high-level company information. In either case, a crosscut shredder should be used to ensure that the documents are adequately destroyed."

Part two to the dilemma of what to do with sensitive data (paper born or disk bound) is how best to keep it safe and sound. Martin Hale, sales director for Sentry Safe, thinks that while companies and home workers are getting better at protecting not only physical documents but their electronic media, too many home workers think only of security products rather than full blown 'Peril Protection', ie fire damage.

"Some 85% of owners believe security safes offer full protection," says Hale. "They do not – they are neither fireproof nor waterproof. In a fire, documents inside will burn. Digital media on an external hard drive or CDs are vulnerable to heat; in a security safe data will perish in a fire; many never realise this. The loss of data may put the business at serious risk. Some products now

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available offer guaranteed digital media protection.”

Hale says that home workers need the same peril protection as 'proper' offices and, while fire proof safes are a good idea, objects such as portable hard drives, digital cameras, flash drives, ipods etc, may only require containment of the smaller fireproof document box and chest kind.

"Fitted with a privacy lock rather than an advanced security locking system; some are waterproof and are ideal for the SOHO environment," adds Hale.

A peril probably not catered for by Hale's safes and one that threatens to undermine virgin home workers' security is vanity. While none of the Seven Deadly Sins particularly contribute to a successful home office, vanity can influence the weak minded to look at their security product choices and choose style over security. But do any products out there offer both?

Most super safe things have a distinct absence of sex appeal, take for instance Saabs, helmets or plastic cutlery.

"Certainly style and security are not mutually exclusive," says Robbins. "As an example, shredders are becoming more stylish, better colour co-ordinated and smaller. In particular, higher security level machines, especially crosscut versions, are now available in sizes that are suitable for the SOHO market."

In Robbins' eyes, the potential is out there to maintain your personal home style without an encroachment of the standard office's aesthetic black hole.

"The key point to make to a home office worker when considering their security requirements is that the level of security and the way that they conduct themselves in this respect, should be the same as if they were working within their employer's premises," he adds. "One could argue that they need to be even more vigilant, personally, as it is their responsibility and there is no system in place to protect the information that they are handling."

So the home worker need put all illusions of a true unity between his personal life and office life through a large crosscut shredder because they, to all intents and purposes, remain at work. They should prepare for invasion and then sit smugly back thinking, 'Ah, my home office is truly now a castle'. And the only person who can do the sacking is in charge, so what's your worry? ■

