

Avoiding the 6 O'clock News

Each day, there is a news report about a hospital, retail firm, government agency, or other entity losing confidential electronic records, improperly disclosing client or patient information, or having records compromised by internal employees and hacker schemes. Even worse than these reports, are the many organizations that never realize their business critical information is at risk.

Record loss adversely impacts an organization's bottom line, through repeated failures in delivering required services, negative publicity, and penalties resulting from non-compliance with governmental regulations.

Effective record management maintains private and secure records. Computer records are private when only authenticated personnel are allowed access, and each record access is accounted for in an electronic log.

Computer record security enables privacy. Secure records result from a risk management process, where risk of improper record access is quantified and strategies for reducing risk implemented. Through this process, organizations can trust that secure records contain valid information, are maintained by authorized personnel, and are available as needed.

Thompson Network Consulting recommends that a risk management process contain the following steps:

1. Estimate cost if records are lost or inappropriately disclosed
2. Identify employees allowed to access records
3. Identify and rank threats to authorized record usage
4. Implement strategies to reduce or accept risk
 - a. Communicate employee policies for proper record usage
 - b. Implement physical and technical security controls
 - c. Develop business continuity plans
5. Monitor record access for effectiveness of protections
6. Identify existence of new threats

Thompson Network Consulting offers solutions that protect confidential electronic records, ensure secure communications, and optimize computer network performance. Our solutions enable organizations to meet expected outcomes for quality service delivery.

Thompson Network Consulting services, security presentations, and event information can be found at: www.thompsnet.com