

Network Protection for Design Professionals

Sensitive and Private Information

Background:

All types of sensitive or private information entrusted to your organization warrant protection according to its level of sensitivity. Of particular concern is personally identifying information such as Social Security numbers, credit card and other financial information. To be able to minimize the risk associated with handling such data, it is important to clearly understand how sensitive information flows through your organization.

How to implement appropriate controls:

- Inventory information that you have by type and location – database servers, workstations, web servers, etc.
The following questions are useful in tracking the information flow:
 - Who sends sensitive information to the organization? Customers? Other businesses?
Credit card companies? Banks?
 - How is information received by your organization? Through your Web site? By email? Transmitted through point of sale devices?
- Develop a plan for how to respond to privacy breaches which includes how to contact individuals whose information has been breached.

Resources:

Protecting Personal Information: A Guide for Business, Federal Trade Commission,
<http://www.ftc.gov/infosecurity/>

Information Compromise and the Risk of Identity Theft: Guidance for Your Business, Federal Trade Commission,
<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/business/idtheft/bus59.shtm>

