

Beginning with this issue of the *Newsletter*, ISSC will present a series of articles on Information Technology Security (IT Security). ISSC invites comments or suggestions for subsequent pieces from all IT Systems users, managers and administrators.

In the series, we will discuss topical issues ranging from viruses, use of the various systems related to sensitive information, passwords, hardware and software to backups and other important matters. The *Secur IT Tips* window will provide you with useful hints and cautions to better promote good personal security practices.

This initial article will examine some of the traditional aspects of security, such as document and information sensitivity labelling. In subsequent articles, we will relate the substance of these aspects to the IT Security environment. You may ask why we are dealing with such seemingly "old issues." In fact, we will show that the two are very closely related.

Sensitivity Labelling

It has always been at the discretion of the drafter of a document - or compiler of information - to determine the security classification or designation of his/her work.

Prior to the issuance of the *Government Security Policy (GSP)*

and the *Access to Information and Privacy Acts (ATIP)*, very little guidance was provided with respect to the application of designations or classifications. This resulted in a large and varied number of documents and information being classified, which were clearly not in the national interest.

Following consultations with management, DFAIT issued the departmental *Security Classification Guide* in 1988. The designations **PROTECTED** and **PROTECTED (SENSITIVE)** were introduced to compliment the well known security classifications. While certain other government departments use the levels **PROTECTED A**, **B** and **C**, DFAIT has relegated **PROTECTED A** to the first category, and **B** and **C** to the **PROTECTED (SENSITIVE)** category. More information on this can be found in the *Guide*.

What is Designated Information?

Designated information is defined as information which lies outside the national interest and may not be classified. The *ATIP* further defines this information as likely to be exempt from disclosure. Examples of designated information include personal information; medical records; information belonging to third parties; certain investigations; audit; competitive position of government; and certain statutory provisions and prohibiting the disclosure of information which does not relate to national security.

What is Classified Information?

The *ATIP* and *GSP* help us determine what information should

be classified in the national interest. The security classifications **Confidential**, **Secret** and **Top Secret** are to be applied to information which, for example, has potential injury to: international affairs and defence; the economic interests of Canada; communications security and federal-provincial relations. This may also include some Cabinet papers and documents.

It is important to note that information must not be classified unless its disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause injury to the national interest.

Secur IT Tips

- Process **PROTECTED (SENSITIVE)** and **Classified** Information on appropriate equipment only; e.g., **SIGNET C2**, **DUCS** and other **TEMPEST** equipment at missions, or stand-alone PCs with a removable hard drive (at HQ).
- **SIGNET D** does not provide adequate safeguards for information above the **PROTECTED** level.
- Refer to the *DFAIT Security Classification Guide* to determine the sensitivity label for your document or information.
- Label your information or document as you process it on **SIGNET D** or **C**. Also, label floppy disks and removable hard drives with the highest sensitivity of the information contained on the disk or drive.

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