

How a Simple Solution Secured Our Law Firm's Confidential Information

By *Shawn Mitowski, Chief Information Officer of Zuckerman Spaeder LLP* *

We take data security seriously at Zuckerman Spaeder LLP. This goes not only for confidential client, case and practice information but also for the personal data exchanged by human resources.

Let's face it, no matter what your precautions, email is just not secure enough. Emails can get forwarded to individuals other than the addressee. Emails are hard to recall if misaddressed. They can't be completely secured during transmission and they can be intercepted by unintended recipients. Shall I continue the list? I'm sure you'll be able to add a few more concerns.

Clearly, using email to send employee-related information such as insurance and health records, compensation data and reviews can leave a firm susceptible to breaches and non-compliance with data privacy regulations like HIPPA.

With this in mind, I began searching for an acceptable solution to secure the exchange of documents and integrate seamlessly with the work styles of all of the firm's constituents, including HR staff, attorneys and administrative personnel. After an in-depth search, I selected Biscom Secure File Transfer for Legal.

EASY TO USE. IRON-CLAD SECURITY

When I first saw Biscom, I was surprised to see how user friendly it was. You can securely send whatever confidential data you might have – social security numbers, compensation and benefit enrollment information and matter-related documents – by simply clicking a button in Outlook and pressing send. You have all your contacts and distribution lists integrated with Biscom. There's no reinventing the wheel.

With Biscom's Microsoft Outlook add-in, users merely drag and drop their documents and files into email messages. The recipients then sign in to Biscom's secure and encrypted Web application to access their data. This added step of security keeps recipients from sharing or forwarding their Biscom deliveries. And as soon as they access the data, notification is sent to the sender which creates an audit trail.

Easy-to-use is all well and good but the most important element is security. Biscom's advanced security technology protects confidential data from unauthorized access and includes advanced encryption for data during both transit and storage. Strong authentication measures ensure that only authorized recipients access Biscom deliveries. Replies from external recipients are secured, creating safe bi-directional collaboration. All Biscom transactions are recorded in permanent logs for compliance and auditing purposes.

This level of security is extended to Biscom's Outlook integration, which makes protecting the transfer of confidential documents easy and intuitive. It adds a level of security without changing user behavior or impacting staff productivity and attorney billable time.

EASY IMPLEMENTATION

With a limited bank of IT resources, it was important to me to maximize Biscom's benefits without overtaxing the IT staff and their time. Whenever I assess new solutions for the law firm, I take special notice of software that doesn't bog us down on the administrative side. The Biscom implementation was painless and up and running quickly. We were able to set it and forget it. This meant IT could concentrate on larger projects and big-picture initiatives.

THE ADDED BONUSES: LITIGATION AND IT BENEFITS

Although Biscom was primarily rolled out to human resources at Zuckerman Spaeder, it is now being used for litigation. The lawyers and litigation support specialists appreciate not only the added security of privileged communications, but also the ability to share large files quickly and easily.

Prior to Biscom, lawyers would spend an inordinate amount of time breaking up large documents and emailing them in batches in order to get them in the right hands. But everyone knows that this process isn't guaranteed. It often causes confusion with a recipient trying to sort through the receipt of multiple documents. When email didn't work, attorneys would turn to the help desk to burn CDs or set up one-off FTP sites to get these files out the door. Neither of these methods of transmission is not secure and would eat up a large amount of the help desk's time. With Biscom, attorneys and staff can now easily upload and securely share large files such as e-discovery without having to rely on IT. Again, it comes back to set it and forget it so you can focus on larger priorities.

GOING FORWARD

Biscom is currently available to all of Zuckerman Spaeder's employees through a Web-based interface that, much like the Outlook add-in, is simple to use. We'll soon be rolling out a formal introduction and training for Biscom firm-wide but honestly almost everyone who has used it has needed little or no assistance at all.

Protecting the law firm from data breaches and noncompliance with government regulations was the driving factor in researching - and ultimately discovering - the ideal solution for secure file transfer. Adoption in our 80-attorney firm continues to grow rapidly, meaning our documents are protected, our clients are protected, and our employees are protected. Sometimes the simplest solutions offer the most comprehensive results..

** Shawn Mitowski has more than 19 years of experience with designing, implementing and maintaining enterprise-grade technology. As Chief Information Officer for Zuckerman Spaeder LLP, he provides the strategic vision for planning, implementing and supporting the firm's technical infrastructure and enterprise systems. He has a master's degree in Information Resource Management from Marymount University and a bachelor's degree in Management Information Systems from Pennsylvania State University.*