

### **Canberra Crackdown on Office Leaks**

The Australian IT News reported in May 2004 that the Government is cracking down on Meta data in Office documents after some embarrassing revelations were discovered in a Microsoft Word copy of a speech made by opposition candidate Mark Latham to the ALP National Conference in January 2004. The incumbent used this information to taunt the opposition. The “Track Changes” feature in Microsoft Word revealed that Mr. Latham had deleted a promise to apologize to the Aborigines and a pledge to cut “higher marginal tax rates.” The document also contained an embarrassing link to a staffer for Simon Creans, the deposed Labor leader.

### **Lawyer Sued over Meta Data**

An article published by the National Law Journal in November 2002 mentions an unusual lawsuit involving Meta data. The family of a witness in a criminal case reportedly sued the defendant’s attorney for wrongful death. The attorney had given the defendant copies of documents without properly redacting those documents, and the unredacted information included the witness’ contact data. In this instance, the failure to properly redact information could be a misdemeanor under California state law.

### **SRS Recovers Deleted Data From PowerPoint Presentations**

Electronic document security scanner development at SRS Technologies has resulted in the inadvertant disclosure of sensitive information that had been deleted from a PowerPoint presentation. The incident occurred when our developers began testing the parser on live documents.

The first case involved a presentation that was being shared among a contractor team. This presentation contained 27 text slides and no graphics. The file size was 10 Megabytes, which caught the team’s attention. After parsing, the file was only 112 kilobytes. The extracted information was a proprietary “Operations Review” for one of the other companies on the team. The presentation contained Bid and Proposal allocations, market strategy, and quad charts for all of their active projects. This is a perfect example of the document reuse problem. In this case, the author used a presentation they liked as a template. They deleted “all” of the slides and started over, or so they thought. We recovered the information from the Reviewing data in the presentation. SRS returned the company’s proprietary data and provided them with a “clean” copy of their document.

The second case involved a local SRS presentation. Our development team recovered five deleted slides from a presentation. These slides contained 17 pictures, one embedded Excel workbook containing proprietary data, and lots of text. This information was recovered from the document fragments. OLE documents, like PowerPoint, are very similar to a file system. Many people know that deleting a file from the file system does not really remove the contents from the file system. Similarly, deleting data from an OLE document does not necessarily remove

that information from the file. We have always claimed in our EDS threat presentation that this information could be recovered. We have now proven that assertion.

## **Document Detective Beta Testing Begins**

SRS started limited Beta testing of our Document Detective electronic document security scanner in December. This software is designed to meet the rigorous Government standards for protecting National Security Information when transferring electronic documents from a higher to a lower classified domain. We expect to offer this program for sale by early spring of 2005. For more information about SRS security solutions, or to participate in our Beta test, please contact Ron Hackett at [rhackett@stg.srs.com](mailto:rhackett@stg.srs.com).

Please feel free to forward this message to other Government personnel you believe would benefit from this information.

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This newsletter is dedicated to raising awareness about the Desktop Publishing Threat to Information Security and to disseminating information that will help mitigate these risks. Our newsletter is published aperiodically when there is news to report. We will not clutter your inbox with idle chatter when there is nothing significant or useful to say. This newsletter is available free of charge to Government personnel and to certain contractors responsible for the generation and protection of National Security Information. Contractor subscriptions are at the discretion of SRS Technologies.

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