

File Ref:00/02/03

17th December 2002

The Committee Secretary
Joint Committee of
Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Kerley,

Submission to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Management and Integrity of Electronic Information in the Commonwealth

Tenix welcomes the opportunity to proffer this submission as a result of an invitation issued by the Committee Secretariat. Tenix Datagate participated in the E-Government Week exhibition at Parliament House in support of the Department of Defence, displaying and demonstrating the Interactive Link and Veto suite of information security products. Both product suites share a common technical base, with the Interactive Link casing being designed to meet military requirements whilst the casing of the Veto range is designed to appeal to the commercial market. The brochures at Attachment A provide technical descriptions of the components of each product suite.

The Interactive Link and Veto suites of products are based on the Starlight research program conducted by the Defence Science and Technology Organisation and the Interactive Link suite has been certified as meeting the Information Technology Security Evaluation Criteria (ITSEC) at the E6 Level, the highest available. Over 4000 of the Interactive Link products are currently deployed in Australian government departments including Department of Defence, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Attorney-General's Department. The products are also under evaluation for Government use in the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

Tenix continues to invest in the commercialisation and development Veto and Interactive Link product ranges as they provide unique capability for protection of electronic data. Agencies responsible for the protection of information vital to the nation's security have a long-standing policy of classifying information according to its potential value to an enemy. With the advent and development computing systems and networks these organisations established separate systems to store data of differing classifications.

Prior to the development of the Interactive Link product range, highly classified electronic data was protected by preventing connectivity between networks carrying information of different classification. The Interactive Link and Veto products use a diode to move data in one direction with absolute assurance that data cannot flow in the opposite direction. In agencies handling information with national security classification, data is only moved from networks managing information of a lower classification to networks managing information of a higher classification. Outside of these agencies the data diode can be used more flexibly, by both government and industry, to

- control data flows;
- segregate sensitive information; and
- protect elements of the national infrastructure.

The White Paper at Attachment B and the Application Notes at Attachment C provide more detailed descriptions of these processes and the technical capability of the Interactive Link and Veto product suites.

Tenix has drawn on over 15 years experience in network and information security in developing the current product suite. That experience clearly demonstrates that products such as Interactive Link and Veto play a vital and essential part in the protection of electronic data. However, a technical solution is only one element of a strategy to protect the integrity of any organisation's electronic information. The technical solution must be integrated into a security strategy that addresses:

- the management process that define and regulate information flows
- the quality and reliability of information sources
- the management of personnel to ensure only appropriate individuals have access to sensitive information;
- the education of the workforce to adequately support security objectives
- the physical security of the information assets and supporting infrastructure.

The Protective Security Manual Australian (PSM) issued by the Attorney Generals Department and the Communications-Electronic Security Instruction 33 (ACSI 33) issued by Defence Signals Directorate provide policy direction to departments on information security issues. These documents have been developed by organisations with substantial expertise in their respective fields and provide sound and effective direction.

Tenix and other commercial organisations continue to work with government and commercial organisations to improve the security of sensitive information they hold. We do this by integrate emerging technologies like Interactive Link into the existing information infrastructure and providing advice on complementary improvements to information management processes.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Rhodes
General Manager Government
Tenix Datagate Pty Ltd

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Attachment A.

Attachment B.

Attachment C.