

DATA PROTECTION SELF CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

DWP Information Directorate successfully creates a system to efficiently train staff in data protection skills and monitor the effectiveness of that training.

The DWP Information Directorate (IFD) has successfully created a system that combines data protection awareness training with ongoing monitoring of data protection skills across the Directorate. IFD's innovative response addresses two of the key findings of a 2004 audit of the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS). The results of the audit, conducted by data protection specialists 'The Enterprise Privacy Group', were overwhelmingly positive, and included recommendations for IFD to provide a rolling programme of data protection training for staff authorised to handle WPLS data, and to implement a management mechanism that provides assurance of the effectiveness of data protection skills across the Directorate.

The IFD team quickly identified the opportunity to automate both requirements within the same automated solution. The Data Protection Self-Certification System (DPSCS) delivers a random questionnaire to each staff member every six months. The questionnaire tests the user's knowledge of data protection and how it is managed within DWP; particular attention is given to the management processes that govern access to WPLS data. The system, then reports the results back to IFD management.

Working closely with the Enterprise Privacy group team, IFD developed a database of over 250 questions and tested their suitability with a cross section of staff members through a series of focus groups. The questions are delivered through a web interface that greatly simplifies system management by dispensing with the need for a client application. Workflow monitoring ensures that users complete the questions within the required timescales, and then generates automated management reports. These are supported by 'confidence factor' measurements that provide the management team with assurance that the questionnaire results reflect 'real world' behaviours.

The DPSCS has been operational for over a year, and the results are very positive. Users report that it has encouraged them to find out more about data protection, and that they have learned a great deal from completing the questionnaires. The data protection team has used the results to target training delivery to those individuals who have the greatest need for it. Confidence factors have provided assurance of the effectiveness of the system.

The DPSCS has proved to be a cost-effective delivery mechanism that has reduced the administrative burden on the IFD Data Protection team whilst allowing it to target data protection training at those areas where it is most needed. The IFD Data Protection team is now planning potential upgrades to the system that will expand the range and style of questions, and customise questionnaires to target those areas where individual users need further assistance.

Bullet Points

- In response to an audit of WPLS, the DPSCS was developed to deliver data protection training across EFD and prove the effectiveness of staff data protection skills
- The system delivers randomised questionnaires to each staff member every six months. Questionnaires are supported by a workflow process that ensures responses are completed, and reports the findings back to IFD management
- DPSCS has been running for over a year, and has received positive feedback from users. The IFD Data Protection team has used the results to reduced their administrative workload and focus their training effort where it is most needed.
- Plans for the next iteration of the system have already been developed, and include enhancements to the style and complexity of the questionnaires.