

Nebulas Security helps BRAL meet Audit Compliance by Protecting Sensitive Financial Information

“Having to impose change on users is always difficult, but now we can provide encrypted email without changing users’ daily habits – that’s a real benefit”.

Dan Davis, IT Manager, BRAL

» BRAL

Established in 1984, BRAL Ltd. is a business support services company within the Blick Rothenberg group, a London-based independent firm of chartered accountants. BRAL assists clients worldwide with outsourced financial administration, management accounting, and payroll services. The company has more than 60 multilingual employees and provides specialised tax, VAT, and other advice to UK businesses as well as companies setting up in the U.K.

» The Challenge

As BRAL works with many US organisations looking to launch UK operations, the company is accredited to perform SAS 70 audits. (SAS 70 is a widely recognised auditing standard developed by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. It specifies the uniform reporting format service which organisations should use to disclose their control activities and processes to their customers and their customers’ auditors. In addition, Section 404 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act makes SAS 70 audit reports even more important to the process of reporting on the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting).

Given this need to comply with Sarbanes-Oxley and customers’ need to secure sensitive financial and payroll information exchanged via email, many of BRAL’s clients had begun to ask about encryption. *“At the time, we weren’t able to set something up.”* recalls Dan Davies, IT Manager at BRAL. Several US clients had requested that BRAL provide an encryption service, and one customer had already stated that using encrypted email would become a communications requirement for doing business with them. *“Because we didn’t yet have a solution, we had one client that enabled us to pick up emails from their system and reply securely the same way,”* Davies recalls

In addition to being able to exchange encrypted emails with clients, Davies also wanted a solution that could accommodate end users who didn’t have an encryption solution. A further requirement was a solution which would work in situations where a public key wasn’t available. *“It’s important that we can communicate easily with our clients and whatever systems they’re using - rather than imposing something on them.”*

To meet BRAL’s needs, Davies began to investigate the encryption options available to him: he looked a number of solutions, including several desk-top based systems, but determined quickly that *“In the end, that approach was going to be far too difficult to manage”*. As a result, he began to look at enterprise-wide solutions.

One of the solutions Davies considered was PGP Corporation’s email encryption offering: the two companies had worked together in another capacity some years ago. Davies added: *“We trialed PGP Desktop a few years ago, but I hadn’t been fully exposed to the enterprise version”*. During this time, Davies was introduced to Nebulas Security, experts in IT security



» Customer needs met

- » Secure email communication across the enterprise
- » Clients demands for secure email met
- » Compliance Sarbanes-Oxley legislation
- » No disruption or changes to users’ working habits
- » Easier management of existing IT systems

» Deployed Solutions

- » PGP Universal Gateway Email solution



solutions and a PGP partner. Working with Davies, Nebulas Security analysed BRAL's needs and identified that an enterprise wide solution was the most effective, particularly as it could be deployed without users needing to change their working patterns and they would need no training. Given this scenario, Nebulas Security recommended a month's initial trial of the PGP solution, but using a PC rather than hosting the solution directly on BRAL's servers.

Nebulas Security's consultant routed a small percentage of BRAL's incoming email to the PC, with the rest taking their usual route through the system. There were four or five users whose email was analysed to ensure that the encryption process was working effectively. The trial also set up two external organisations to receive and send encrypted email to BRAL. Nebulas Security's consultant installed, tested and supported the month's trial and Davies was impressed with Nebulas Security's expertise, commenting *"The installation engineer was one of the best consultants I've had on any piece of software"*.

» The Solution

Following the successful trial, PGP Universal Gateway Email was deployed to secure all the company's electronic communications. Davies said that one of the most compelling reasons for deploying the system was that it appeared seamless to all the company's users: *"Internally, users don't really see any difference because they don't have to do anything to encrypt or decrypt an email. They just send and receive email in the normal way. The only thing users may notice is that incoming emails now include a statement identifying when each was received and decrypted"*.

He added: *"It's always difficult when you have to impose changes on users, and the fact that we're able to provide encrypted email without changing users' daily work habits is a big benefit. It worked well when we were dealing with people who already had a desktop solution and with people who also had an enterprise solution"*.

Whilst user may not have noticed any significant differences since the PGP solution was implemented, BRAL has identified lower operating costs as a result. By integrating the PGP solution with its installed Microsoft Active Directory, BRAL leveraged its infrastructure investments.

"We were already familiar with Active Directory, so integrating the two makes it a much easier system to manage, because we don't have to change users in several places" explains Davies.

» The Future

Extending the email encryption system into BRAL's parent company is part of Davies' strategic plan. Having assessed how their implementation is working and given the increasing demand for encrypted communication from clients, BRAL is confident that PGP Universal Gateway Email will be rolled out to Blick Rothenberg as well. Davies is very pleased with the outcome of the project and recommends both the PGP solution and Nebulas Security who undertook the successful implementation. In conclusion, he commented: *"I think the whole project went very well - it's a true success story"*.

» Nebulas Security

- » Nebulas Security is a leading provider of advanced IT security, mobility and compliance solutions.
- » Since its formation in 2001, the company has developed partnerships with customers to build their IT security infrastructures and protect their sensitive data. This is supported by the company's extensive implementation experience, close relationships with key security technology vendors and detailed product knowledge.
- » Nebulas Security's customers include many blue chip and FTSE 250 organisations operating in financial, media, retail, legal and healthcare sectors
- » Based in London, Nebulas Security is a division of the Nebulas Solutions Group, the security, acceleration and virtualisation specialist.
- » The Group's combined expertise helps organisations maximise the efficiency and security of their infrastructure, as well as reducing operating costs.
- » For further information, visit www.nebulassolutions.com

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