

If the terms 'cyber-vaulting' and 'digital safe havens' have yet to hit your radar, let Mark Thomas explain why they are creating quite a fuss in the technology world – and how they could benefit you and your clients.

cyber-vaulting

■ A year ago I attended a meeting regarding a rather curious topic – that of cyber-vaulting and the creation of digital safe havens. Having been in the technology sector for many years I was my usual sceptical self as to its value.

However, after attending I was blown away by the whole concept and as a result have spent the last year working with the technology in order to gain a greater understanding. This article summarises my findings.

digital drive

There is now ever increasing pressure from our business partners and customers, along with legislative and regulatory bodies, to digitise many parts of our business. This is no more prevalent than in the area of our sensitive paper-based information.

I am sure that most of us agree that this is a sensible idea. However, digitisation of sensitive information does come with issues; for example once we have an electronic copy of this sensitive information:

- where should I store it?
- how do I ensure that it is secure?
- how should I grant access to it?
- how do I ensure that an adequate audit trail is in place?
- how do I ensure that this information can be securely exchanged with my customers and B2B partners?

At present, companies where paper records form a large part of their business ensure that sensitive documents are physically secured; either in a locked cabinet/drawer, in the company safe or often within their bank's

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vault. This physical approach ensures that all of the above issues are covered, with access to sensitive documents being granted on an as and when required basis; based upon the rights of the individual, along with a full manual audit trail thus providing peace of mind.

cyber-vault

Now... consider this; if we are all happy with the concept of a physical vault providing security for our paper-based information, why not apply the same principle to the digital age, whereby a virtual 'cyber-vault' is used to store all of our sensitive digital information in much the same fashion?

In essence a cyber-vault is comparable with a software version of a physical vault. In the first instance there is the cyber-vault and within this there are virtual safety deposit boxes, which are created to store relevant sensitive information very much in the way that a bank vault would. Once created, permitted individuals are allowed access to the vault but can only see the specific safety deposit box(es) that they have been granted access to. For example, as the owner of a business I decide to set up a vault and to give each of the relevant departments (finance, HR, infrastructure etc)

their own safety deposit boxes for them to store their sensitive digital information in – i.e. financial information, personal staff information, device configurations/passwords etc. Once these have been set up I then ensure access is only granted to the relevant individuals and at the times that are specified (similar to a time lock).

There is one very important benefit over a traditional physical vault; now that these documents are stored within the cyber-vault, I can allow my customers and B2B partners etc to access specific information remotely over the internet (subject to adhering to all data protection legislation), whilst ensuring that the same levels of security that my old physical vault provided me with are adhered to, simply and cost effectively and with a full audit trail in place.

take-up

I hope that although the above is a simplistic view, you can now see why I was so impressed with the concept. Many organisations of all sizes are starting to adopt this technology. As a result, I fully expect that more and more of you will either start to use it yourselves or will find business partners that do.

This technology has the ability to completely change the way in which we all interact on both internal and external fronts, whilst having the flexibility to ensure that this does not become yet another technology we have to become slaves to. In essence, this is technology that delivers true business changing benefits – now that is something that I feel is worth writing about. ■

Mark Thomas – Managing Director,
Chameleon Security Solutions