## The Importance of Data Loss Prevention

"DLP" (Data Loss Prevention, also referred to as Data Leak Prevention), is a term referring to the use of technology to protect confidential data from being shared with unauthorized parties. DLP systems monitor data in use, at rest, and in motion, seeking to prevent data breaches in real time. DLP technology relies on algorithms that determine which data transfers to block.

Why is DLP important? The value of information cannot be understated, and the risks associated with the exposure of sensitive data gives rise to the need for improvement in DLP practices. Due to growing concerns regarding issues such as: corporate espionage; cybersecurity data breaches; and changes in data privacy obligations, DLP technologies are a required business component for corporations and law firms. DLP protocols ensure that the flow of information within and outside of a corporate enterprise, or a law firm, follows an established path.

An element of DLP workflows requires interactions with other systems, such as a DMS (Document Management System), and/or a CMS (Content Management System). DLP protection relies on some other intelligence about the data in order to determine permissible transfers of information. DMS protocols established to determine where the files reside are often used to share information with the DLP technology, however, this does not generally address the specific content within each file. CMS technology can be used to identify content within files that require the DLP to block the transfer of that information. Determining "What" the file's contents are is the first step in crafting a plan to protect such material. Files might require varying levels of security based on its content. Transfer of certain information might never be permissible outside the corporation by the DLP, while other transfers might be permissible but only under some limited set of circumstances.

Many corporations and law firms rely on their users to create and assign "tags" to newly created files. The level of sensitivity of a information may rely upon user classification to help determine the level of sensitivity of the individual file, or portions thereof. However, manual user generated classification is often inaccurate, and not an efficient process since it reduces employees productivity. Using technology to auto-classify documents help improve the DLP technology's performance. Auto-classification is programmable to identify certain terms or phrases within a document that would trigger the DLP protections.

One of the shortcomings of DLP protocols is that there are a high number of "false-positive" incidents. These false-positive occurrences require I.T. involvement, and also delay transmission of information which can frustrate employees, thereby reducing productivity. By having files classified properly in a DMS, and using proper auto-classification technology to organize information, the frequency of false-positives that trigger the DLP protections is substantially reduced.

DLP systems are only effective if they have accurate knowledge about the data it's trying to protect. Through the use of effective information governance and file classification practices, the performance of a DLP system can be dramatically improved. In addition, technology can be customized to add further enhancement to DLP practices. Certain files might be permissible for transfer if specific material is redacted. Technology can be employed to locate and auto-redact sensitive content. Through the use of automated redaction, DLP systems will permit transfers of data, while still preventing unauthorized sharing of specific sensitive information. Auto-redaction technology can reduce the burden that DLP systems impose on I.T. personnel by reducing false-positives, and also increase business productivity by allowing transfers of content that employees are authorized to share.

Valora's unique proprietary technology, "PowerHouse", serves to fill many of the needs that DLP systems require to function effectively. PowerHouse identifies the content of the data, and provides intelligence about each individual file or point of data. Valora's technology is a "Rules-Based" system that can be custom configured to program the specific types of information that a corporation or law

firm deems to require DLP protection. The Rules within PowerHouse include algorithms and elements of pattern matching recognition, and are used to auto-classify information, assigning categorization tags to files. The information classified by PowerHouse can be integrated into any DMS, and can also work in conjunction with other CMS software.

Valora's PowerHouse not only works at the file level, but also at the content level within each document. Hence, the DLP can rely upon the auto-classification provided by PowerHouse to determine what information requires extra levels of protection. Using PowerHouse increases the efficiency of not only the DLP, but also enhances the performance of any DMS. In addition, PowerHouse increases business productivity by increasing the efficiency of data transfers. PowerHouse reduces the amount of false-positive incidents attributable to the DLP. In addition, Valora's technology not only seamlessly enables the user to determine "What" the information in their possession is, but also helps enforce "How" that content needs to be handled by the DLP.

Moreover, PowerHouse enables the DLP to determine which individual users might have access to view transferred data, by enforcing established security permission levels. Hence, a DLP might permit internal transfer of information between certain individuals, but restrict others from having access to files, or specific portions of any document.

Since most DLP technology does not have the ability to determine what the contents of a file are, relying on PowerHouse to serve this function is an effective automated solution. In addition, PowerHouse is able to classify both structured and unstructured data. The classification provided by PowerHouse remains with each point of data, while it is at rest, in use or in motion.

Guest Blogger: Joe Bartolo, J.D.

Follow Joe on Twitter: @joseph_bartolo and connect with him on LinkedIn