

Information Governance Strategies for Work-from-home Employees

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Many companies have suddenly been thrust into a position where their employees need to work from home. This raises a number of Information Governance issues: will the information and data that employees access from home be secure? Can they effectively collaborate? Will this come back to haunt companies later during eDiscovery? Can we comply with our records retention requirements? Forced with having to have employees work from home, companies may be tempted to give up trying to maintain good Information Governance strategies in the near term. Today, companies need to go in the other direction, and accelerate Information Governance. Not only for compliance, security and risk reduction, but to ensure their employees can be more productive.



Figure 1 Key Information Governance drivers

Use Tools You May Already Have

Applying Information Governance to employees who work from home requires technology that, fortunately, most companies already own. These tools traditionally have been deployed for securing access to applications, and intra-department communications. They can also be applied and implemented to support remote employees. Virtual Private Networks, or VPNs, for example, allow secure connections from a home personal computer or even iPad back to a corporate repository.

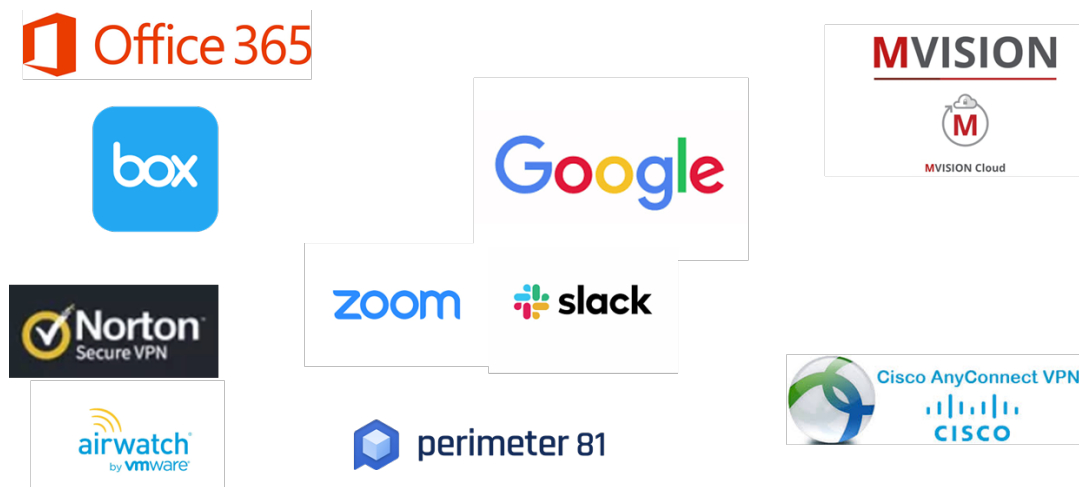


Figure 2. A variety of products need to be configured to ensure employees can work at home securely, compliantly and productivity.

Enabling Secure Information Sharing

Beyond security, the real challenge for working from home is ensuring that information is properly protected, it's stored in a secure repository, and can be easily accessed by others. Instead of saving files and other information on the home personal computers, companies should aggressively enable file sharing to the cloud. These systems can support bi-directional syncing from the home personal computer to the cloud. These cloud-based systems support tagging, labeling as well automated classification tools for encrypting or restricting sensitive or confidential information. Many companies already have Office 365 or other cloud-based information storage. Now is the time to leverage these in-house technologies and implement security and governance controls.

Train, Train, Train

Even though collaboration tools may already exist in companies' environments, most users aren't proficient in using them or perhaps even know they exist. When employees are working from home, it is hard to overdo training. Training can include videos from your vendor, as well as customized training that shows how and where documents are stored on your system. This should also include applying records retention and data security classification policies. Finally, training should also cover what not to do, including leaving files on drives in home computers or using insecure web sites to share information such as Dropbox.

Companies should also consider establishing Collaboration Sites for messaging and self-help. These sites can provide links to recorded computer-based training and videos, as well as an updated Frequently Asked Questions Page. These should be supplemented with one- or two-page job aids for frequent tasks. Each department may want to identify "Collaboration Champions" who receive extra training. These champions can establish chat channels for informal peer to peer help within a department.

Don't Give Up on Good Information Governance, Accelerate It

Information Governance strategies help companies ensure their information is secured, managed, and compliant. Perhaps more important, these strategies help ensure that information is accessible both within and across departments. These collaboration strategies become more important as employees work from home. Faced with the sudden challenge of everyone working from home, companies should not give up on good Information Governance, rather they should accelerate it. Not only for compliance and risk reduction, but to ensure employees can remain productive, engaged, and working together.

Additional Resources

About Contoural

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