
Protecting Social Security Numbers

VPR Plan – Org 04/40/90

Executive Summary

- There is significant risk to individuals from departmental, faculty, and staff computers containing SSNs, as evidenced by security breaches here at Iowa such as laptops being stolen, or intrusions on desktop computers and servers.
- An important step in eliminating this risk is to identify systems that have SSNs stored on them. To help find SSNs on computers, the University has licensed a software tool called Identity Finder.
- It is imperative that this software be used on University computer systems and personal equipment that holds University data. Identity Finder will flag files that contain SSNs and other sensitive information so that you can take appropriate action. All identified files that are no longer needed should be deleted as soon as possible, but no later than June 30.
- If you keep files with SSNs on-line, you must apply for an exception to the University Social Security number policy. If a requirement exists to keep files identified with SSNs, recommended options are to move them onto external media (i.e., tape, CD, DVD) and keep them in a secure, locked location; or replace the SSNs with another identifier (i.e., University ID or sequential number) within the files. Other options are described at the web site listed below.

University Policy: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/ii/36.htm>

Registering Use of SSN's: <https://survey.uiowa.edu/wsb.dll/149/ssnregistration.htm>

For units supported by Research Information Systems (RIS), RIS support staff will:

- scan all file servers for the presence of SSNs
- create a report for each supported department, indicating the location of each file possibly containing SSNs
- work individually with departmental directors and liaisons to remove the files based on the report
- re-run the report after a month and keep working with them until all SSNs are removed or secured (if needed)
- will provide assistance to supported staff who want to install and use Identity Finder on their desktop computer
- Units supported by RIS include: OVPR, ICE, DSP, HSO, RSA, OAR, HPO, NANO & Pentacrest Museums

If your unit is not supported by RIS, you will need to:

- ensure that your unit has installed and used Identify Finder software on all desktop system (see attached information)
- complete a short questionnaire that outlines your plan to ensure your units' systems and applications are in compliance with this policy (see attached). This questionnaire is due to Cheryl Reardon on Monday, April 21, 2008
- remove or secure all Social Security numbers by June 30, 2008
- contact ITS Helpdesk if you have questions
- Units not supported by RIS include: Obermann, IA Consortium, HRMS, CMRF, NMR CBB, CGRER, CHEEC, UHL, OSA & PPC

Questionnaire to Ensure the Social Security Numbers are Removed From Desktop Systems

Obermann, Iowa Consortium, HRMS, CMRF, NMR CBB, CGRER, CHEEC, UHL, OSA & PPC

Due to Cheryl Reardon (201 Gilmore Hall) on Monday, April 21, 2008

Department Name: _____

Unit Director: _____

IT Contact in the Department (name & Phone Number): _____

Brief Description of Your Plans regarding the Social Security Number policy:

Departmental IT Contact Name

Phone Number

Unit Director Signature

Date

Additional Information for Units not Supported by RIS Identifying Social Security numbers with Identity Finder

Identity Finder is a UI supported tool used to identify Personally Identifiable Information (PII), in data files and e-mail messages. Identity Finder is capable of searching for financial information, SSNs, and other sensitive data. For a complete list of features included in Identity Finder, see http://www.identityfinder.com/Products/Identity_Finder_Feature_List.html

The UI license agreement makes this software available to University of Iowa and UIHC employees and for departments, to be used on UI owned machines for UI related business, including a single installation of the program for employee personal/home use. The software is not licensed for student or student employee use. It is available for Graduate Assistants to use.

Where can I get the software?

The software can be downloaded from the ITS Help Desk Software Download web site at <http://helpdesk.its.uiowa.edu/software/signin.htm>. You must login with your University Hawk ID and password to obtain the program. We recommend using the customized version; however a non-customized version is also available.

Some units will be deploying the Identity Finder software to workstations automatically through the Windows SMS service. You will be notified by your unit if you don't need to install the software on your work computer. You will need to install it yourself on your personal/home computer, if there may be university information stored in files there.

Please note: You need Administrator rights in Windows to install the software. If you do not have Administrator rights, please seek the assistance of your departmental IT person. Identity Finder is currently only available for Windows computers. Macintosh computer users can run the scan via Virtual Desktop (see <http://virtualdesktop.uiowa.edu>). Instructions for installing and running the software using Virtual Desktop are available at the ITS Support Center link below.

Training Tutorials and Help for using the Identity Finder Software

ITS Support Center for Identity Finder: <http://helpdesk.its.uiowa.edu/security/identity/>
(Instructions for downloading and installing, scanning, and working with the results)

ITS Help Desk: Call 384-HELP or E-mail its-helpdesk@uiowa.edu

Online tutorials are available at http://www.identityfinder.com/help/identity_finder.htm
(Includes all aspects of running the software, but is not customized for UI use)

Recommended Actions for Files that are identified with SSN's

1. Use the shred function in Identity Finder to securely delete the file (Consider the UI retention policy with respect to official documents - more information is available at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~fusrmp/>).
2. Move the file to a removable media such as a CD, Tape, or DVD, and keep it in a secure (e.g., locked) location. The quarantine function in Identity Finder can be used for this purpose.
3. Open and then edit the file to remove or mask the SSN information, or replace the SSN information with another Identifier (such as University ID number, Employee ID number, or any sequential number) and then save the file.
4. Employ a method to encrypt the file. (*It is highly recommended you work with your IT support to ensure encryption is properly set up and encryption keys are securely backed up.*) Encryption is not currently available for e-mail. More information is available at <http://helpdesk.its.uiowa.edu/encryption>.

Recommended Actions for E-Mail

1. Use the shred function in Identity Finder to securely delete the e-mail.
2. Create a folder in removable media such as CD or DVD and move (drag and drop) the message/s into it. Keep the removable media in a secure (e.g., locked) location.
3. Open the E-Mail message, select other options and then select the Edit Message option. Remove the SSN and then save the message.
4. At present, Identity Finder will not work automatically with any e-mail client other than Microsoft Outlook. (That is, it will perform only a textual search of mail files on the local computer.) Please keep posted for future updates.

Other Considerations:

E-Mail that does not constitute an official university record should not be kept longer than its useful life.

Consider deleting business messages older than one year, or move them off-line for archival.

PDF image documents that need to be retained should be in a registered online location. There is no expectation that these be rescanned without SSNs, or deleted (until retention is expired).

Consult with your IT support group for options available to remediate large databases and custom department applications that contain SSN's.