

Encryption is becoming an essential tool in modern business, partly due to the increasing use of mobile computing says **Geoff Marshall**

Accidental loss or theft of notebook computers and palmtops is costing companies that do not invest in encryption technology a great deal of money in lost data – both because the data may be irreplaceable or confidential.

But how does one choose from the many encryption products on the market? Are the products as secure as they say they are? Are they easy to use?

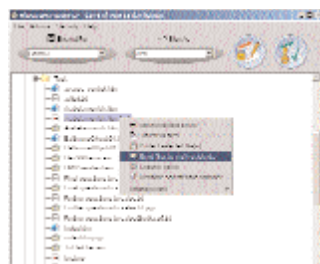
In this group test we are going to answer these questions by examin-

ing products that are on the market today.

In assessing products, and marking them out of five, we have taken 'performance' to mean not just speed of operation but also how secure they are.

FileAssurity OpenPGP

Version	1.2
Supplier	ArticSoft
Price	\$49
Contact	www.articsoft.com



SC MAGAZINE RECOMMENDED FileAssurity OpenPGP is designed to be a low-cost alternative to PGP, while retaining full compatibility with PGP. With it, you can generate, import and export X.509 and PGP keys and it also supports encryption/decryption and digital signing/verifying of standard PGP files. Files or folders may be encrypted for storage or transmission by email. Bulk data encryption is carried out using 256-bit AES, with public-key-based Diffie-Hellman being used for session key exchange. RSA and DSS are used for digital signatures. Another feature is secure deletion according to US Government DOD 5220.22M. All 32-bit Windows platforms are supported.

It supports PKI in a completely open way. Once installed, you can easily start to use the PKI facilities. Simply import the public keys of all your intended recipients, set up your own keys, select the files to encrypt and choose for whom you want to encrypt them.

There is a built-in key manager that enables you to generate your own X.509 and OpenPGP certificates and keys – or you can import them from any certificate authority. There is also a backup and restore facility for archiving keys. Although not present in the software tested, a Central Administration utility fully supports central key management and key recovery for an additional cost of \$20 per user. There are other PKI facilities – for example, the keys signed by the major certificate authorities are automatically recognized, and this feature shields you from the complex process of importing root certificates to verify keys. A secure password-based logon is required to access all keys.

Email attachments may be encrypted and digitally signed, regardless of which email client you use. You simply right-click on the file icon within FileAssurity OpenPGP's browser window, and

select the option, "send to mail recipient" from the pull-down menu. Then your default MAPI email client is automatically opened ready to send the file. ArticSoft claims that this approach is better than full integration with an email client as it avoids the risk of compromise due to vulnerabilities in the email client software.

You can also send encrypted files to people who do not use any version of PGP using a free downloadable reader, which the recipient can use to generate a public-private key pair and then decrypt your message using his public key and finally verify your digital signature.

SC MAGAZINE RATING

Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Performance	★★★★☆
Documentation	★★★★☆
Support	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★

FOR Works with any email client.

AGAINST No support for two-factor authentication.

VERDICT A competent file encryption system that supports PKI in an open and easy-to-use manner.



SC Magazine Reprint

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