



Security & YOU

Think.
Assess.
Protect.

Learning Minute: **Email Association**

Based on true stories from real life at SNL

SAND2015-10022 O



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What Happened

Gerald received a long email string that had several recipients discussing a recent series of research reports from universities. His colleagues were discussing the unclassified information found in these reports that would have implications regarding their projects.

Gerald noticed that the **facts** pulled from those open source reports included in the email, while different, were put together in such a way that the email was possibly *classified by association*.

Gerald contacted his Derivative Classifier, and after a review, Gerald calls Sandia's Security Incident Management Program (SIMP).

Think

- Who has a need to know (NTK) to receive this information?
- Who is included on distribution?
- Could the information in the rest of the email be combined with the information you are inserting cause the entire string to be classified?
- Should the discussion be moved to a classified network?
- Should I engage my Derivative Classifier for a review?

Who should be on distribution and has a need to know?



These questions should be considered for all electronic messages.

Assess

- Can this information be relayed in person rather than email?
- Are the email recipients aware of possible classification by compilation, or classification by association, issues?
- Who has the potential to see this email?
- Will the email leave Sandia's firewall?



Protect

To ensure that sensitive email does not go outside the firewall or to anyone without a need to know, follow these steps:

- Remember to review the entire email string to ensure that no possible compilations or associations of sensitive information are present.
- If in doubt, start a new email.
- Better yet, move the email conversation to a classified network.



Final Thoughts

Be mindful of information sent through email. The information in this Learning Minute is related to ***Classification by Association***. Are you aware of the other type, ***Classification by Compilation***?

Classification by Association concerns 1) two or more **different** unclassified facts that when combined in a specific way result in a classified statement, or 2) two or more **different** classified facts (or unclassified and classified facts) that when combined in a specific way result in a higher classification level or more restrictive category (*e.g.*, two Confidential statements together may create Secret, or an unclassified fact with an NSI fact may create FRD).

Classification by Compilation occurs when 1) a large number of **similar**, unclassified pieces of information are put into a document in such a way (through selection, arrangement or completeness) as to become classified, or 2) a large number of **similar** classified pieces of information (or unclassified and classified information) adds enough value to become classified at a higher level (*e.g.*, a series of test results separately are Confidential, but combined together in one document in such an arrangement as to form a complete picture of a weapon characteristic could be classified as Secret).

Think. Assess. Protect.

Questions? Ideas

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Contact the Communications Team at cdocs@sandia.gov with ideas and suggestions for future topics.