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Secure Communications with Mobile Devices During In-Field Activities

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One of the classic problems in information security is how to exchange confidential information securely in uncontrolled environments. There have been innumerable academic and commercial hours spent resolving this question. In traditional practice, securing communications meant investing in satellites, specialized hardware, rigorous security engineering and testing, and expending a lot of resources. For this reason, smaller organizations have often been unable to secure communications.

The widespread adoption of mobile communications and the modern mobile device has brought about unprecedented abilities to stay connected with colleagues during work activities. As connectedness has increased, so have the opportunities for information compromise. The enormous mobile landscape, with competing ecosystems, large research and product development budgets, proliferating devices, and rapidly-shifting technical foundations prove to be a tremendous source of both opportunity and risk.

With the reality of shrinking budgets and increasing threats, many organizations, commercial enterprises, and product vendors are looking for new ways to utilise existing resources for secure communications and mobile work capabilities. Keeping communications private and secure using the infrastructure of the world' s telecommunications network and standard computing and mobile devices is the challenge.

This paper will examine some methods for communicating securely using consumer mobile products and evaluate the risk such tools can present to an organization in the context of inspection work in the field.

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