

DEXcenter™

Rapid Results: Force Protection, Inc.

DEXcenter protects intellectual property and armed forces by providing robust, secure and accountable data exchange at leading military vehicle manufacturer



Military Precision

For most organizations, the protection of intellectual property is a prime business concern. Their ideas, their trade secrets – even their financial results – are, after all, what defines them as business entities. For some companies, though, such sensitivity is about more than just keeping secrets from the competition.

One such organization is Force Protection Inc. (FPI). FPI manufactures defense products and vehicles for use in the military and has made a major contribution to the safety of armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan through technology specifically designed to withstand mine explosions. FPI's MRAP (mine-resistant ambush-protected) armored vehicles feature a unique V-shaped hull designed to deflect blasts from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), minimizing danger for the occupants and maximizing the chances of repairing the vehicle itself after an explosion.

FPI's designs have been adopted by armed forces throughout the world. More than 4,500 of its award-winning Cougar and Buffalo vehicles have now been supplied to US, UK, Canadian, Italian, French and other coalition partner forces on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The company, based in Ladson, South Carolina, employs around 1,250 people worldwide and is rapidly expanding, particularly in Europe: Force Protection Europe is now under contract with the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) after a competitive bid to design a new Light Protected Patrol Vehicle (LPPV).

Added Sensitivity

As with many of FPI's contracts, the new MOD project will involve employing local contractors and suppliers. This, in turn, means sensitive engineering data must be transferred and distributed around the world.

FPI operates a data transfer regime specifically designed to address the need for extreme security and unimpeachable accountability. The US Department of State has strict governance rules about the communication of sensitive data and thoroughly audits its contractors' processes. Other countries' governments are equally strict. ITAR and other governmental regulatory violations could result in fines that could run to millions of dollars and mean the loss of government contracts.



Enter DEXcenter

Two-and-a-half years ago FPI set out to put in place a process and framework to meet their needs for security and accountability. The company was growing very fast and could no longer rely on the FTP-based system that was being used up to that point. In its search for a robust solution that would automate encryption and tracking but would not be a burden to users, FPI found DEXcenter.

DEXcenter is designed to offer OEMs like FPI a platform for technical data packaging (TDP) and validation. Not only does it provide users with a straightforward interface for arranging the transfer of the large files typically associated with complex design and engineering data, it can also be configured to automate TDP process and validate the package prior to delivery.

In short, DEXcenter provides all the tools needed not just for transferring design data from one point in the engineering supply chain to another, but also for ensuring that the data is ready-to-use when it gets there. The fact that it does so via a user interface no more complicated than an email system and is backed up with a suite of process management tools was very attractive to FPI.

“DEXcenter is making it possible for us to establish and maintain global standards for security and accountability.”

*Senior Data Transfer Administrator
Force Protection, Inc.*



Enterprise Solution

DEXcenter has been deployed throughout FPI's engineering teams, and is now used for all design and engineering data transfer. FPI has identified DEXcenter's main plus points as control, flexibility, security and ease of use. A specific benefit for FPI is the ability to have monthly logs of all data transfer activities, a key requirement for the US government.

Such has been the success of DEXcenter at FPI that it's now being used in areas other than the pure design and engineering domain. User manuals and other documentation, for instance, are now routinely distributed via DEXcenter, and the manufacturing teams are also beginning to use the system.

FPI began with a DEXcenter implementation in the US and now plans to expand use to its European team. As an FPI Senior Data Transfer Administrator concludes, “DEXcenter is making it possible for us to establish and maintain global standards for security and accountability.”

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