How To Use WinRAR's Encryption Feature in Law Firms

Law firms require file compression and encryption software that provides the highest level of security for both them and their clients, ensuring that sensitive information is sent safely and is stored securely remains the top priority.

Data Leaks & The Threats They Pose

Data leaks pose a real threat to law firms. Legal professionals are a top target for cybercriminals and those nefarious individuals who just want to amass as much personal data as quickly as possible. If hackers manage to gain access to a legal office's IT system, they have the potential to steal confidential and sensitive information about the clients and the law firm itself.

One major concern is software vulnerabilities. Not using encryption software is one of the most efficient ways for criminals to hack their way into computer systems, using existing vulnerabilities and unpatched software. Ensuring that software is kept up-to-date is one of the most important things that those working in the legal profession can do to safeguard themselves against a potential attack.

Improving awareness in law firms is essential. Establishing company-wide protocols for all users, and explaining what steps to follow in the event of a security breach is crucial. The formation of a security culture within the workplace is fundamental, and guaranteeing the security of the data being held is only possible if everyone is on the same page.

One of the biggest threats facing law firms is file sharing. Relying solely on email or other tools such as Dropbox or OneDrive, puts the data being shared at high risk of interception by third parties. Email is responsible for 92% of malware infections through Phishing scams, making it one of the primary causes of data leaks. Information being shared via unsecured channels is next on the list, followed by employee's accidental mistakes or deliberate sabotaging of the firm by stealing and selling the confidential information onto bad actors.

The average cost of a data breach in the US was $7.91 million in 2018, with 64% of customers saying they are unlikely to do business with a company that has experienced a data breach in the past.

There are strict regulations governing how documents should be shared and stored in the legal field. All legal professions are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that the sensitive and confidential information regarding their clients cannot be accessed or intercepted by a third party, whilst in transit or at rest. This includes files sent to or from the Cloud.

Lawyers must carry out thorough checks of the file-sharing software they intend to use for transferring and storing data, making sure that the chosen product guarantees the security of the data being exchanged to the highest possible level.

Informing clients about the file-sharing and encryption software law firms will use to communicate with them, allows the client to approve the chosen method and earn trust. Law firms should also keep backups of sensitive data that is stored on the Cloud, so that in the event of a system crash, the data can still be easily accessed with the use of file recovery solutions.

Using Encryption In Law Firms

Data encryption takes ordinary text (plaintext) and scrambles it into what appears to be unintelligible gibberish. Using the correct encryption key unscrambles the gibberish back into ordinary text that can be read as normal.

Ideally all information should be encrypted, protecting law firms from becoming the victims of costly leaks. Using encryption software enables law firms to achieve compliance with numerous regulations.

Here is a look at the various uses of encryption in law firms:

- **ENCRYPTION IN TRANSIT**

Data that is sent across the internet or within an office network is referred to as "In Transit". Because this type of data can be easily intercepted and read, it is imperative to use encryption software. This type of encryption is commonly known as end-to-end encryption and is used in many messenger services and email providers. This kind of data encryption solution should be mandatory for any law firm.

- **ENCRYPTION AT REST**

Saved emails, documents and other data on devices is known as “Data at Rest”. Often used on the data stored on hard-drives, laptops and mobile devices. Lost laptops, tablets and smartphones pose huge problems for law firms, with them holding so much sensitive data. Encryption at rest and encryption programs on these devices should also be mandatory.

- **ENCRYPTION FILE LEVEL**

File-level encryption takes each file on your computer, tablet, smartphone, laptop, etc and encrypts them separately. This ensures that all confidential information is only accessible to those with the correct encryption key. It means that the files are securely stored and can be securely shared.

Clients demand a certain level of security when using the traditional ways of file sharing, such as email. Law firms must comply with strict regulations regarding their handling of confidential data and must ensure it is shared in a secure and compliant way.

How Can WinRAR Help With Data Encryption?

WinRAR uses AES 256-bit as its data encryption standard. It is easy to add encryption and password protection to an archive that can then be securely shared, stored or placed in the Cloud.

WinRAR can be set to make regular data backups, ensuring that all data files are kept up-to-date.

WinRAR offers the possibility to recover files that have been damaged and can repair damaged archives.

WinRAR has huge storage capabilities and can store practically any number of files or practically any size. The limits depend on the file system and available memory.

WinRAR supports drag & drop, with the option of time-stamping archives to prevent accidental modification.

WinRAR allows the use of Admin rights, which help to set master passwords and accidental file modification.

WinRAR is FIPS approved; its data encryption capabilities can help legal professionals remain CCPA and GDPR-compliant.

As one of the most popular and trusted compression utilities on the Windows platform, WinRAR has built up a loyal following over their 25 years.

For law firms and professionals in both the public and private sector, WinRAR is the one-stop solution.

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