

By Bogdan Zoltan, Security and Search Engines Editor

Children in Danger Due to Nine Stolen Laptops

UK authorities in trouble once again

Approximately 63 children have been exposed to identity theft after nine laptops belonging to workers of the Middlesbrough Council got stolen a few days ago. All the affected individuals will be contacted in the next few days in order to remain up-to-date with the latest details of the investigation, BBC informed today. "The laptops were used by child workers and contained case files on children and their families," the same publication mentioned. What's interesting is that the laptops were protected by an encryption systems, although they didn't store financial information about the victims. That's why Gill Rollings, director of children, families and learning, believes the thieves only wanted to steal the equipment rather than the data stored on the systems. "We believe that the nature of the information means that the possibility of risk to anyone is minimal. Indications are that the thieves were seeking the equipment rather than any information," he told BBC. It seems like the United Kingdom has a serious problem when it comes to residents' information because the country was affected by more or less critical data losses every once in a while. It all started with the HMRC data loss when no less than 25 million were put at risk due to two lost CDs that contained sensitive information. Sure, the government was pretty calm and assured the victims that no private details were placed on the lost discs. However, the Top Gear host Jeremy Clarkson found a simple way to prove that the affected people may be in danger: he published his bank account in a public newspaper. Obviously, somebody managed to transfer some money from his account using a minimum amount of details, just like the ones placed on the lost CDs. Getting back to today's stolen laptops, the security companies underline that people might soon lose their confidence into the government's departments as their security measures put their data in danger periodically. "While this theft may have been entirely opportunistic, with the laptops already sold on, Middlesbrough Council now has to publicly justify itself because there's still the risk that the sensitive data they contain could fall into the wrong hands. Although some attempt has been made to protect the data, the fact that they can't say for sure exactly how strong that protection is will hardly inspire confidence in the parents of the children affected," Jamie Cowper, director of marketing EMEA at PGP, told The Register.