

RACGP Computer Security Guidelines

Judy Evans
Manager, e-health



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

Outcomes

- An understanding of
 - The vigilance required in both computer security and information management to ensure the protection of both patient health information and business information
 - The RACGP Computer Security Guidelines as aligned with the RACGP Standards of General Practices 4th edition



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

Our world is changing....

E-Health is the use, in the health sector, of digital data - transmitted, stored and retrieved electronically - in support of health care, both at the local site and at a distance.

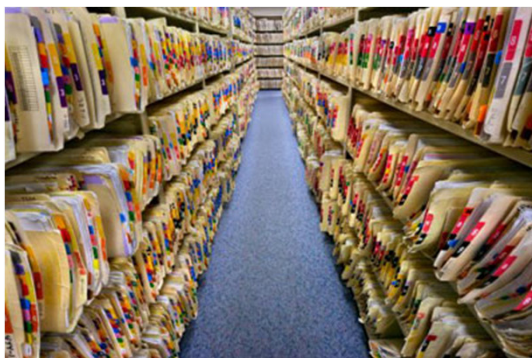
World Health Organisation's definition of E-Health: www.who.int



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

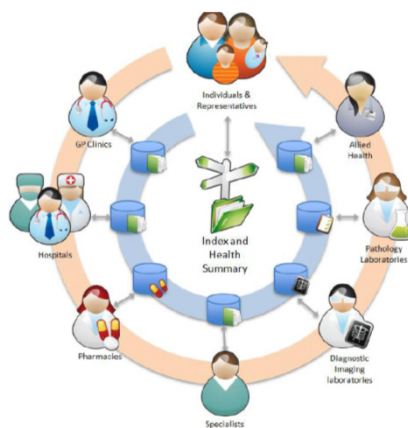
The past.....



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

The future



The paradigm

- The use of clinical desktop systems and the electronic management of information has become a vital tool in the delivery of safe and high quality care for patients
- General practice has specific requisites for computer and information security and it can be a challenge to find external security experts and technical service providers who understand the business of delivery care in the general practice environment

Computer security guidelines 3rd edition

The guidelines provide

1. A checklist to determine whether reasonable security measures are established in a practice
2. A guideline for each 'risk' category
3. Templates and check lists to guide practice staff through the milieu of issues and considerations in developing and enforcing policy and protocols to support high quality information management



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

Standards for General Practices 4th edition

Standard 4.2

Management of health information

Our practice has an effective system for managing patient information.

Criterion 4.2.1

Confidentiality and privacy of health information

Our practice collects personal health information and safeguards its confidentiality and privacy in accordance with National Privacy Principles.



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

Standard 4.2

Standard 4.2

Management of health information

Our practice has an effective system for managing patient information.

Criterion 4.2.2

Information security

Our practice ensures the security of our patient health information.



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

The issues

- Lack of risk analysis
- Lack of designated authority
- Lack of data management processes
- Lack of business continuity and disaster recovery planning
- Lack of password security
- Lack of security 'culture' and leadership
- A lot of trust in the system



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

- It is a challenge to produce guidelines that will suit all practices
- Variance in IT environment
- Variance in staff competency
- However, practices need to demonstrate a structured and risk analysis approach to ensuring security for the information that is held within the practice information systems
- The computer security guidelines are in excess of the requirements for accreditation

Coordinator role

- The practice security coordinators is the person responsible for drawing together the computer security issues that confront the practice and is very much a leadership role.
- The coordinator might be one of the doctors, a nurse, a senior receptionist or the practice manager
- A general role description for the computer security coordinator is outlined in Appendix A of the guidelines
- It is suggested that the role be reviewed annually

Position requires

- Enthusiasm for computer technology
- They don't have to know how to fix computers or be technologically advanced
- They do need to understand risk averting procedures and be dedicated to making sure procedures are carried out
- Be the point of contact between the practice and external IT expert
- Know when to call the IT expert
- Educate staff on security procedures
- Ensure that procedures are followed



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

IT issues covered

- Practice computer security coordinator
- Practice security policies and procedures
- Access control and management
- Business continuity and disaster recovery plans
- Backup
- Malware and viruses
- Network perimeter controls
- Portable devices and remote access security
- Computer and network maintenance
- Secure electronic communication



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

Computer security check list

- Computer security check list – 10 items
 - Coordinator
 - Policies and procedures
 - Access control and management
 - Business continuity and disaster recovery plans
 - Backup
 - Malware and viruses
 - Network perimeter controls
 - Portable devices and remote access security
 - Computer and network maintenance
 - Secure electronic communication



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

Templates

- Staff roles and responsibilities
- Business continuity and disaster recovery
- Backup
- Internet and email usage
- Access control and management
- Malware and virus protection
- Network perimeter controls
- Portable devices and remote access security
- Physical security
- Computer and network maintenance
- Security management and reporting
- Secure electronic communication
- Appendix A – Asset Register



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

Business continuity

- Firstly: A business continuity plan should first cover the critical functions of the practice so that it can continue without major disruption to the patients and staff, ensuring that no patient is put at risk and that the ongoing viability of the practice is maintained
- Secondly: It should contain the information necessary for returning the practice to its normal state



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

Disaster recovery

- This vital document will initially address the business continuity plan for administrative and clinical functions of the practice
- The computer security coordinator will then make a rapid and provisional investigation on what caused the 'crash' and will then contact technical support



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

IT expert

How do you know if your external IT provider is an expert in the medical software needs of general practice

- Due diligence – ask for references
- What is their background
- What software do they support
- What are the support level agreements (SLA)
- How is support provided and in what time frame
- If my server fails....how long will it take (> 4 hours look elsewhere)



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

Contract with IT expert

Should include:

- Data confidentiality
- Remote access
- Backups and restoration procedures
- Response times
- Costs



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

Computer Security

- Availability of information when it is needed – Access
- Ensuring the integrity of the information – Quality
- Maintaining confidentiality – Privacy

- Protection of patient information
- Protection of the business information
- Protection against identity theft



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.

Thank you

Judy Evans
Judy.evans@racgp.org.au
RACGP National Office
1 Palmerston Crescent
South Melbourne 3205



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.