



wardhadaway
lawfirm

“At Ward Hadaway, we wanted to differentiate ourselves from the rest of the market by offering our clients a level of information security that meant that we could guarantee 100% client confidentiality at all times.

What is more we wanted a system that was easy to use and actually bucked the trend by improving efficiency.”

Greg Taylor, Head of IT, Ward Hadaway

Top 100 law firm Ward Hadaway selects Egress Switch to provide firm wide secure encryption standards and complete confidentiality when sharing client information

Established in 1988, Ward Hadaway is one of the largest full service law firms in the North of England and a Top 100 law firm in the UK. The Firm has built a reputation based on service quality, innovation and a commitment to meeting client needs. With a regional, national and international client base including organisations within the Public and Private Sectors, Ward Hadaway has over time made considerable investment in technology to ensure that clients receive the highest levels of service and security.

The Challenge

Increasingly law firms and their clients are becoming aware of the need to secure information. This is evident by the number of firms undertaking the ISO 27001 accreditation aimed at centrally securing information held within an organisation.

However, while procedural security is important to help educate end users about the risks associated to information sharing, technology plays a vital role, enabling firms to preserve client confidentiality and avoid unnecessary loss of data.

As a duty of care, law firms are required to ensure that any information involving a client remains confidential. Therefore unless the firm has the right data security systems in place when sharing client information, they not only risk losing highly sensitive information but also fail to comply with their contractual obligation.

The Tipping Point

“The tipping point for us was when 3 of our major clients came to us with their own email encryption products that they wanted us to start using. While this was considered manageable by the firm, imagine if 100 or more clients came to us with similar alternatives to sharing confidential information. The cost and management overhead would be huge!”

Follow the data Control

“It wasn’t enough to implement a system that encrypted the email while it was in transit. We needed to be able to control what the recipient did with the email once they had received it, potentially restricting their ability to forward it on, print it or save the attachment.”

Integrated security

“Password protected files and portal based technology not only offer little security around the data itself, but also can introduce challenges around end user workflow and system integration.”

Why Egress Switch?

“During the selection process it soon became clear that ease of use was as important as the security of the system itself. Egress Switch exceeded our expectations and met all of our business requirements as sending an encrypted email was as simple as sending a normal email. Better still, their unique ‘follow the data’ approach to security also satisfied our desire to provide end-to-end data assurance.”

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The Selection Process

With their reputation for embracing innovative technology in order to enhance the services they provide to clients, Ward Hadaway recognised the importance of email and data encryption when sharing information electronically. In today’s competitive legal services market the firm also recognised the opportunity this presented to differentiate them from the competition.

Greg Taylor, Head of IT, Ward Hadaway commented; “Ultimately everything is about differentiation. The legal market is now so competitive it is very hard to prove that the service provided by one fee earner is better than the service provided by another. Obviously at Ward Hadaway we have our reputation as a leader in the market, but we are always looking at how we add additional services to our core ones so that a client feels like they are getting the highest level of service and value.”

Ward Hadaway also recognised their contractual responsibility to ensure 100% confidentiality when sharing information and therefore finding a system that offered “end to end” control when sending an email was a key part of the selection process. “It wasn’t enough to implement a system that encrypted the email while it was in transit. We needed to be able to control what the recipient did with the email once they had received it, potentially restricting their ability to forward it on, print it or save the attachment,” stated Taylor.

During the selection process it soon became clear that ease of use for end users and clients was as important as the security of the system itself. As Taylor explains; “The tipping point for us was when 3 of our major clients came to us with their own email encryption products that they wanted us to start using. While this was considered manageable by the firm, imagine if 100 or more clients came to us with similar alternatives to sharing confidential information. The cost and management overhead would have been huge! Instead we needed to find our own system that was 100% secure and so simple to use that clients would see the immediate benefits.”

During the evaluation a number of solutions including password protection on files, secure portals, and TLS were considered but discarded immediately because they were complex, prone to failure or expensive and time consuming to manage. “Password protected files and portal based technology offers little or no security at all, while PKI based products are just too much like hard work for those involved. It’s like asking someone to strip the fuel injection system down on your car before you start it; some users could do it - but it’s not easy,” stated Taylor.

The Solution

As part of the evaluation process Ward Hadaway completed a detailed review of Egress Switch, the leading provider of data encryption services to organisations in the Public and Private Sectors. Having installed the integrated client software they were instantly impressed by the ease of use, flexible deployment options, and unique ‘follow the data control’.

“It soon became clear that Egress Switch met our key business requirements. The Microsoft Outlook integration meant that sending an encrypted email was as simple as sending a normal email and their ‘follow the data’ approach also satisfied our desire to provide end-to-end data assurance throughout the lifecycle of shared information,” commented Taylor.

“Furthermore, Egress Switch offered seamless media encryption and secure large file transfer functionality included as part of the package. This meant we could support multiple transfer mechanisms when exchanging personal or sensitive data that was too big to send by email – something we now come to rely upon throughout several areas of the business.”

One of the more unexpected but important benefits of Egress Switch was the unique system functionality that allows the recipient (client) of an encrypted email to communicate securely back to the sender completely free of charge. This means that all Ward Hadaway clients get the added benefit of proactively using the system for free.

Tony Pepper, CEO for Egress Software Technologies commented: “We are delighted to have been selected by Ward Hadaway to secure the confidential information sent electronically to their external third party suppliers and clients. By working together, we are confident that Egress Switch will continue to help Ward Hadaway differentiate themselves from competitors in the market, maintain their outstanding reputation for delivering innovative client services, and ensure that they continue to meet all regulatory and contractual requirements.”

Greg Taylor continues; “When it comes to information security we don’t take decisions lightly because the impact on our national and international client base could be huge. That’s why we carefully considered every possible option before selecting Egress Switch as our preferred product of choice. As a result, we are able to offer clients an enhanced level of service and efficiency whilst ensuring we protect them from data breaches and potential ICO fines, something that differentiates us from other legal practices in the market.”

Taylor concludes; “Remember, if it’s going to cost you a double degree in computer science and whatever else to send secure emails users would rather go back to sending it by post. Here at Ward Hadaway, we feel that you shouldn’t have to be an IT expert to use information security, they don’t want to be – in our case they want to be lawyers.”