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INNOVATORS

Our monthly look at who is 'pushing the boundaries'

COMPANY: KontrolOne Ltd

INNOVATION: Cutting down on the amount of waste which has to be disposed of when hard drives are crushed.

MARKET: Data recovery market is lucrative, and the digital forensics side of the business should break into Europe once the different privacy laws are mastered.

INSPIRATION: Paul Purseglove had some data recovered and realised how inefficient the process was. "I saw the potential because I knew how much I had paid for the process!"

STATUS: Turnover during 2011 was about £150,000, and is expected to reach £250,000 this year, depending on how the hard drive recycling business fares.

Ready for digital forensics market

When the government's Forensic Science Service (FSS), which employed 1,600 people, is wound up this year (2012), it will be a big opportunity for a Kent business.

"The FSS closes in March, and assuming all its contracts will be available for tender, private companies such as ours will go after them," said Paul Purseglove, UK operations manager of KontrolOne Ltd, which is on Kent Science Park. He estimated the digital forensics market is worth about £140 million a year, and about 50% of that has already been taken by private companies.

"We will grow because of that business and because the crime which requires digital forensics is growing," Mr Purseglove already has a network of freelancers who he can call on to do the work, which will have a particular focus on cyber crime. "The government is taking this very seriously because there are billions of incidents every year which involve cyber crime."

Recently, the government said that some of the secret technologies created at its eavesdropping centre GCHQ will be offered to private industry as part of cyber security strategy.

The plans could lead to the government being paid large sums for software developed by the intelligence agency at Chel-

tenham. The new cyber strategy makes clear that better cooperation is needed between the public and private sectors to face the dangers posed by espionage and crime on the web.

“there are billions of incidents every year which involve cyber crime”

The plans explain how the government is going to spend some of the £650 million it set aside for cyber security in last year's strategic defence and security review.

Mr Purseglove said that before a cyber crime could be investigated, electronic discovery would involve a digital forensics team going into a company and retrieving emails for a certain time period so the information could be made available to cyber crime investigators.

As an addition to that service, Mr Purseglove hopes to collaborate with Denis Edgar-Nevill, head of the computing department at nearby Canterbury Christ Church University and chairman of the British Computer Society's cyber crime forensics committee, on a concept which is new to British industry.

In a process similar to disaster planning, Mr Purseglove is planning to assess big companies in terms of their readi-

ness for cyber crime investigations. "With forensic readiness, a company's internal processes can be restructured to make information available much more quickly and save companies on the cost of investigations," Mr Purseglove said. "We would award companies a certificate and compile a forensic readiness index which could be used to insure companies against being investigated."

KontrolOne Ltd owns a brand called Assured Data Recovery, which is how Mr Purseglove began on Kent Science Park earlier this year. Assured Data Recovery is a service for domestic consumers which, as the name implies, recovers data from hard drives and other devices.

Mr Purseglove, who taught himself computing and worked for companies such as GE and Reuters, accepts that business has been "very hard" because of the recession. He had to invest £30,000 in Google advertising to generate £150,000 of sales, which, he said, was expensive. In addition, Assured Data Recovery did not have its own cleanroom facilities, so a lot of work was outsourced, which added to costs. KontrolOne does now have its own cleanroom facilities, so Mr Purseglove expects business to improve this year.

As well as digital forensics, Mr Purseglove is relying on a new service which will take the platters out from hard drives which are then recycled to the data recovery industry. "We will issue a certificate to the customer to say the platter has been destroyed and provide a test report for each hard drive." In a process called hard drive neutralisation, the platters are removed from inside the drive in a clean environment, then shredded and recycled, leaving the remainder of the drive intact but void of sensitive data. "The platters are made from a ceramic and glass substrate, and I am trying to find a recycling company which needs the material for a remanufacturing process."



Smashed hard drive