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## Feds choose 10 vendors to secure mobile data

**After extensive review, government awards encryption software contracts worth \$79M**

By [Carolyn Duffy Marsan](#), Network World, 06/18/07

The U.S. government has awarded contracts to 10 software companies that meet its requirements for protecting sensitive information stored on laptops, handhelds and other mobile devices.

The contracts, known as blanket purchase agreements, are open to all federal, state and local government agencies, as well as other North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries.

The U.S. General Services Administration, which oversees the so-called Data at Rest Encryption Program, says the agreements could be worth \$79 million or more.

GSA is urging all government agencies to deploy encryption technology for its mobile devices to avoid data breaches, such as the one that the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) experienced last year when a laptop containing personal information about 26.5 million military veterans and spouses was stolen.

The 10 winning contractors are:

- \*MTM Technologies, with [Mobile Armor](#)
- \*Rocky Mountain Ram, with [SafeBoot](#)
- \*Carahsoft Technology, with Information Security Corp.'s [SecretAgent](#)
- \*[Spectrum Systems](#), with SafeBoot
- \*[SafeNet](#)
- \*HiTech Services, with Encryption Solutions' [SkyLock](#)
- \*Autonomic Resources, with [WinMagic](#)
- \*[GovBuys](#), with WinMagic
- \*Intelligent Decisions, with [Credant Mobile Guardian](#)
- \*Merlin International, with [Guardian Edge Technologies](#)

Federal officials said 30 companies bid on its data encryption program, but only 10 of them were able to meet the more than 100 information security requirements put together by a Pentagon-led evaluation team.

The encryption software provided in the contracts will secure laptops, PDAs, flash drives and other removable storage media.

"This will raise the bar for security for everybody across DoD, for every laptop, every PDA, every mobile device," said Dave Wennegren, Deputy CIO of the Defense Department, at a press conference held Monday to announce the contract awards.

Federal officials are urging commercial industry to follow its lead on encrypting data stored on mobile devices.

"Whenever we band together to look for products that raise the bar for security, we're helping everybody, including our private sector partners," Wennegren said. "The fact that we're making a big deal out of these contracts will help resonate with our industry partners that this is important and it's worth the cost. We found a bunch of companies that are going to do it effectively for us."