



Case Study Interoperability of Classification Markings



Objective

The objective of this case-study is to provide guidance how to provide interoperability between entities which utilise different classification markings.

The Problem

The problem is a twofold as different entities use different classification markings for classified documents AND they might use different tools or a manual procedure to apply the classification marking.

To get an idea of state classification markings refer to:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classified_information

Considerations

1) The exchange of classified documents between entities requires an agreement stating how information of one entity would be handled and protected within the other entity. Therefore each entity exchanging classified documents with a number of N other entities requires to have N agreements in place. Beside the point that this would require a vast amount of agreements, it would generate an un-workable situation for your users who would need to understand all of your partner entities' classification markings.

--> in the best case there would be only one agreement which binds the entities classification marking to a global protection profile.

--> the classification marking of each entity would be linked with a global standardised classification label. The global standardised classification label must be:

- i) in a human readable format, so that users can see, read and understand the classification of the document;
- ii) in a common understood language - English would be the 'de-facto' best understood language for all users.

Note: the difference between a classification marking and a label is that a classification marking constitutes that the document is classified, and therefore is applicable to handling procedures (and mis-handling penalties). A label is purely a representation of the classification marking.

Consider the classification markings of the states of Albania (I Kufizuar) and Argentina (Reservado), both being classification markings for a RESTRICTED document. So the classification marking "I Kufizuar" could be represented with the label "RESTRICTED".

--> a global standardised marking needs to support

2) Entities with a classification marking and protection policy will likely keep their markings, therefore interoperability can only be achieved with an additional label. The additional label will identify the originator and the classification of the document.

3) Classification marking tools should be used to enforce classification markings in the right format and spelling, and to enable a consistent additional classification label.

4) Classification marking tools should add technical markings which could be interpreted by classification assessment and protection devices, like firewalls and email-guards.

Conclusions

A Global Standardised Classification Label (GSCL) is an effective manner to implement interoperability and inter-entity understanding of classification markings.

The GSCL is added to the classified document in human readable and technical form. GSCL defines name-value pairs representing the classification level.

Name: 'GSCL'

Value: ['PUBLIC', 'OFFICIAL', 'RESTRICTED', 'CONFIDENTIAL', 'SECRET', 'TOP SECRET']

Human readable GSCL labels follow the following syntax:

'GSCL/' + Originator + '/' + Value

Originator is the

The label is added to the classified document as a new line after the classification marking.

Technical GSCL labels are added to the document as a property with the name 'GSCL' and the appropriate label.

Examples – Human Readable GSCL

Classification Policy	Classification Marking	GSCL label
Albania	I Kufizuar	GSCL//ALB//RESTRICTED
Argentina	Secreto	GSCL//ARG//SECRET
Australia	Protected	GSCL//AUS//RESTRICTED
Belgium	Vertrouwelijk	GSCL//BEL//CONFIDENTIAL
Bulgaria	Строго секретно	GSCL//BUL//TOP SECRET
European Union	RESTREINT UE / EU RESTRICTED	GSCL//EU//RESTRICTED
India	गुप्त	GSCL//IND// SECRET
NATO	RESTRICTED	GSCL//NATO//RESTRICTED
Russia	Секретно	GSCL//RUS//CONFIDENTIAL
Switzerland	GEHEIM	GSCL//CHE//SECRET
United States	Secret	GSCL//USA/SECRET