

Henry backs easier reporting

Julian Bajkowski

Treasury secretary Ken Henry will personally spearhead a charm offensive aimed at enticing companies to take part in the government's ambitious \$200 million Standard Business Reporting (SBR) project. The project is aimed at slashing red tape by automating how companies file financial paperwork. The federal government said this week it would stick to a mid-2010 target for the project, which will consolidate multiple financial reporting requirements to regulators

across state and federal boundaries. While industry participation is voluntary so far, the government is counting on its success as a way to cut compliance costs for companies. Project head Paul Madden said: "Ken Henry sees this program as very strategic for business and through that very strategic for the economy. "We can take out some of the costs and complexity of the reporting we have." Mr Madden said one example of progress was the consolidation of bits of information that companies must put either on paper or

electronic forms, which have proliferated over recent years. "If you add up all the little boxes on there, there's just over 6000 different data fields," he said. "By the time we weed out the duplicates or the [same] things with different names, we get down to just under 2000... it's a 62 per cent reduction in reporting definitions." Part of Treasury's big sell of SBR to business will be warts-and-all presentations from US corporations that have already deployed similar technologies. These would help businesses to communicate their requirements to

financial software developers, many of whom are now in the process of adding new web-based tools to their applications in preparation for the launch of SBR. Software companies now embedding SBR capabilities include Reckon, MYOB, SAP and Oracle. One example of how reporting will change is the requirement for employers to lodge tax file number declarations. While most Australian payrolls require separate transactions for the creation of a new payroll record and lodgement of a tax file number, the introduction of SBR will automate the process.

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"Anything can be compromised," says Robin Bienfait, CIO of BlackBerry maker Research In Motion. In a video interview with MISAustralia.com, Bienfait discusses BlackBerry security and where the real productivity gains are in enterprise mobility. To watch the video, go to www.misaustralia.com/multimedia



PCs protected by the Freeze

Hands on
Peter Moon

A decade ago, we depended on a brilliant utility called Trial Blazer to guard our PC against harmful changes. Regrettably it died along with Windows 98 because its Adelaide developer couldn't sell enough units to afford the software development kit needed for Windows 2000. What were the world's PC users thinking? The mantle of world's best PC protector has passed to Deep Freeze from www.faronics.com. Like Trial Blazer, it's not sold as an antivirus tool but it staunchly defends against them. It's not an uninstaller but it handles that role, too. How it works is a closely guarded secret but the bottom line is that a reboot returns a PC to a pristine state. It's remarkably robust. We stress tested it by deleting as many Windows system files as an XP PC would allow. By rights, the beast should have been nearly dead but sure enough, a reboot restored it to perfect health. The effects of viruses, installed software and system changes all vanish after a restart. Faronics call a protected drive frozen and of course it can be thawed so that intended changes such as software installation and Windows updates can be applied. Trial Blazer was smarter in one respect. It allowed changes to a protected drive to be accepted and made permanent.

We tested it by deleting as many Windows system files as an XP PC would allow.

We could trial a new program and keep it if all went well. With Deep Freeze, you can test in protected mode but you'll need to thaw and install the program again if you want to keep it. In any setting where you don't want your

working PC to be fouled up, Deep Freeze is gold. Public computers, training machines, shared notebooks and any device within striking distance of a teenager are all candidates for the Deep Freeze treatment. But so are corporate networks that want to ensure a stable, predictable environment without aggressively locking down every desktop.

There's a simple single-user version that offers few options beyond choosing which local drives are to be frozen and which can be permanently written to. The Enterprise version can manage an army of PCs, forcing them in and out of frozen states, rebooting them automatically to reset the system and scheduling thawed Windows for regular operating system and software updates. It also lets the administrator create a thawed partition on the fly, giving users a space to save work that won't be lost on reboot.

Internet news groups abound with tales of attempts to bypass Deep Freeze. The only feasible way seems to be booting from an external disk or drive. We recently wrote how DeviceLock from www.deviceblock.com can close off this loophole.

We call Deep Freeze a PC tool but folks on planet Mac and even Linux land can snap freeze their systems as well. Single-user versions on all three platforms are \$53 and a trial version is available from www.faronics.com.

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