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POSTED AT 8:27 AM JUNE 25, 2009

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Illegal e-waste dumped in Ghana includes unencrypted hard drives full of US security secrets...

The much-vaunted anti-terror eagles at the TSA have subcontractors whose hard-drives turn up in Ghanaian junk-markets in heaps of illegally disposed-of e-waste. The drives are stuffed full of unencrypted, sensitive documents:

A team of journalists investigating the global electronic waste business has unearthed a security problem too. In a Ghana market, they bought a computer hard drive containing sensitive documents belonging to U.S. government contractor Northrop Grumman.

The drive had belonged to a Fairfax, Virginia, employee who still works for the company and contained "hundreds and hundreds of documents about government contracts," said Peter Klein, an associate professor with the University of British Columbia, who led the investigation for the Public Broadcasting Service show Frontline. He would not disclose details of the documents, but he said that they were marked "competitive sensitive" and covered company contracts with the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Transportation Security Agency. The data was unencrypted, Klein said in an interview. The cost? US\$40..."It was a wonderful, ironic twist," Klein said. "Here were these contracts being awarded based on their ability to keep the data safe."

Off-camera, sources in Ghana told the reporters that data thieves routinely scour these hard drives for sensitive information, Klein said.