



OFFICE OF  
**INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

# **THIN CLIENT COMPUTER INVENTORY VERIFICATION AT THE OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR IN THE MAIN INTERIOR BUILDING**




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**INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

MAR 19 2014

Memorandum

To: Hilary Tompkins, Solicitor  
Office of the Solicitor

From: Donald W. Cairns   
Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations

Subject: Final Inspection Report – Thin Client Computer Inventory Verification at the  
Office of the Solicitor in the Main Interior Building  
Report No. IU-IS-SOL-0004-2013

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) has completed an inspection of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of the Solicitor (SOL). Our objective was to determine whether SOL could account for all of the Dell thin client computers it purchased over a 3-year period to facilitate Cloud-based computing for its employees.

We found that SOL had not performed a complete physical inventory of the computers and had not attached inventory identification tags to them until 2 years after they were originally purchased. We also found that information on SOL's Financial and Business Management System (FBMS) inventory list was incomplete and inaccurate. We make four recommendations to improve the accountability of SOL's equipment.

**Background**

Thin client computers are designed for Cloud-based interface. All data is stored in an external server, and the computers allow users to connect to shared data through a special network. Software is loaded onto the computers, but they have no capacity for data storage. These computers are significantly cheaper to purchase per unit than traditional desktops or laptops, but require more space on the storage area network.

SOL purchased 140 thin client computers in 2009 and 2011 at a total cost of \$51,363, but most were never distributed to staff. A former SOL employee explained that the computers were not issued because SOL did not have enough knowledgeable IT staff to cover the additional work that would be required at that time, and its servers did not have the storage capacity for both Cloud data and the information SOL is required to retain from the Deepwater Horizon incident.

A 2013 OIG investigation into an allegation that most of these computers had been stolen led to discoveries of potential waste and mismanagement. During the OIG investigator's

fieldwork, SOL provided inadequate information on the number of computers in its possession and on their locations. This prompted the investigator to refer the issue to us for inspection into potential loss of and failure to use this equipment.

## Results of Inspection

Our inspection revealed several issues connected with the computers:

- Only eight of the computers were ever issued to employees in SOL field offices. At the time of our review, the unissued computers were sitting in a limited-access storage room at the Main Interior Building (MIB) and had not been removed from their original packaging except for when SOL's IT staff added inventory identification tags to them in response to the OIG investigation (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Thin client computers stored at MIB.

- SOL has never performed a full physical inventory of the computers.
- Although SOL has acquisition procedures, its IT group is not following them. The official FBMS inventory listing of the computers was incomplete and included incorrect purchase amounts.
- SOL's equipment manager stated that SOL should be following the Department's guidance for equipment management, but he could not identify or explain the guidance.
- We counted the computers ourselves and found that 11 of the 140 are missing. No one in SOL was aware of the loss, and it has not been properly documented.

## **Recommendations**

We recommend that SOL:

1. Conduct a full, accurate physical inventory of its equipment annually in accordance with the Departmental Manual (DM 114-60.3);
2. Use the Department's equipment management and acquisition guidelines and procedures, to include tagging items, including them in the FBMS inventory with all pertinent information, and tracking their locations and responsible persons;
3. Complete the appropriate loss/disposal forms for the 11 missing computers; and
4. Decide whether to issue and use the computers or to excess them.

Please provide us with your written response to this report within 30 days. The response should provide information on actions taken or planned to address the recommendations, as well as target dates and title(s) of the official(s) responsible for implementation. Please send your response to:

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Office of Inspector General  
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## **Scope and Methodology**

To accomplish our objective, we—

- obtained a general understanding of the Department's equipment management regulations;
- determined the results of the 2013 OIG investigation;
- visited SOL at MIB and interviewed SOL employees;
- reviewed relevant documentation; and
- performed a count of the thin client computers.

We conducted our inspection in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation as put forth by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. We believe that the work performed provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions and recommendations.

The legislation creating the Office of Inspector General requires that we report to Congress semiannually on all audit, inspection, and evaluation reports issued; actions taken to implement our recommendations; and recommendations that have not been implemented.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact me at 202-208-5745.

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