

Argos tackles shrink for growth

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Catalogue retailer Argos has worked with retail loss prevention specialists, the ORIS Group, to jointly develop two configurable software tools that provide better fraud and incident management across its stores and distribution centres (DCs).

Adrian Sherry, Argos solutions manager said an incident management product became necessary when the legacy database his team relied on was no longer supported by Argos's IT division.

The crime analysis team took delivery of The ORIS Group's web-based Case Manager tool to provide a process to manage cases of fraud with timely and complete closure of investigations. Case Manager captures the cost of fraud and financial impact of investigations, as well as monitoring the efficiency of profit protection managers and their clear-up rates in the field.

The Incident Manager tool is designed to help the head office 'solutions' team identify hot problem areas around the country and help prioritise the profit protection team's workloads accordingly.

The new incident reporting system that Sherry and his team played a major role in developing maps incidents of 'shrink' as they happen. "Our solutions help desk receives 1,200 calls per week and deals with everything from acts of crime to broken CCTV systems," he said. "So prioritising action was like trying to find a needle in a haystack under the old technology regime of opening up unwieldy spreadsheets."

The new technology identifies trouble spots for retail loss, identifies patterns of fraudulent behaviour, analyses cost to the business and even highlights opportunities for civil recovery against offenders.

"The output from Incident Manager drives our profit protection strategy in terms of priority site visits, which is important when your field staff each have 60 stores each under their control. Now they have quality information they can work with," said Sherry.