

# How Inforenz cracked the code leading to Diana Dors' millions

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A 400-year-old code held the secret to star's hidden fortune for 20 years

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A medieval code that perplexed spies and code breakers for centuries and which was used by Diana Dors to keep secret the whereabouts of her hidden fortune has been cracked by Inforenz, the information forensics specialist. The Inforenz team's feat was featured in Saturday night's Channel 4 documentary, *Who Got Diana Dors' Millions?*.

Free software demonstrating how Inforenz helped unravel the mystery and giving details of the code can now be downloaded from the company's web site at [www.inforenz.com](http://www.inforenz.com). This week, the Inforenz team will talk about its exploits and explain why concealed data is becoming an increasing issue for modern business at COSAC, the international forum for information security professionals and business managers.

Before she died, Diana Dors gave her son, Mark Dawson, a coded message telling him that it held the whereabouts of a hidden £2 million fortune, and that her husband, actor Alan Lake, had the "key" that would unravel the code. But, tragically, just months after Diana Dors died of cancer, Alan Lake committed suicide, taking the secret of how to decipher Mark's code to his grave. For 21 years Diana Dors' son Mark had failed in his quest to break the code but, when he discovered Inforenz, the story began to be revealed.

"Mark came to us with a tatty scrap of paper with a sequence of letters written in a traditional coded five-character column format," said Andy Clark, Director of Inforenz. "We routinely crack codes and passwords to reveal accidentally or deliberately concealed data for large corporations and businesses, so this very personal quest intrigued us."

Inforenz Director and Chief Cryptographer Vince Gallo takes up the story: "Our first task was to establish what encryption technique had been used. Because the Personal Computer was not available when Diana Dors created her document, we needed to adopt a pre-PC mindset. She was likely to have used a classic encryption technique.

It was a challenge for Inforenz – but one which required our experience and cryptographic expertise rather than the power of Deep Thought, our code-cracking supercomputer. We analysed the cypher text and concluded that she had used the Vigenere code to hide the secrets to her fortune."

"Inforenz did the impossible," said Mark Dawson. "In discovering that the code was Vigenere and in cracking it, they succeeded where others failed over 21 years. If it was not for their skill, wisdom and expertise, I would have taken the uncracked code to my grave. From now on all of my code-breaking and cyber-sleuthing will be with Inforenz!"

The Vigenere code was developed in the 16th century by Blaise de Vigenere, a French diplomat, and was used by the Vatican and governments for secret diplomatic communications for centuries. It was not

cracked until 1863, when a Prussian military officer devised a statistical method for breaking the code. Today, the Vigenere code is a staple of the cryptography student's syllabus because it is a classic demonstration of a fundamental cryptographic technique – keyed substitution.

Today encryption tends to be much more computationally intensive to break. Using its dedicated code-cracking supercomputer Deep Thought, Inforenz specialist forensic capabilities include helping companies protect themselves against the malicious leaking of information and in the recovery of data that has been concealed by encryption or password protection.

#### Websites

Inforenz [www.inforenz.com](http://www.inforenz.com)

COSAC [www.cosac.net](http://www.cosac.net)

Channel 4 [www.channel4.com/dianadors](http://www.channel4.com/dianadors)

#### Notes To Editors

#### About Inforenz

Inforenz Limited is a computer forensics investigation company dedicated to helping law enforcement agencies and commercial organisations solve their most challenging information recovery problems, especially those involving password protection, encryption, document analysis and steganography. Inforenz provides support services throughout or at the most difficult stages in computer forensics investigations.

Co-directors Andy Clark, Vince Gallo and Nick Spenceley, key players in the development of information security over the past two decades, founded Inforenz in 2001. Together with other staff and trusted partners selected for their knowledge, experience and integrity, they offer real-world investigation experience, technical knowledge and sound management practice for the benefit of clients and partners.

#### About COSAC

14-19 September 2003, County Kildare, Ireland

<http://www.cosac.net>

Now in its tenth year, the COSAC symposium, sponsored by the information forensics specialist Inforenz, offers an international forum for an elite group of information security professionals and business managers to share their greatest successes and challenges in the most confidential of settings.

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