

## Homeland Security to Test World-Check Database

By **ROB BLACKWELL**

WASHINGTON - The Department of Homeland Security has hired a British software company to help it sort through information it receives from financial services firms to help it find possible terrorist financiers and other financial criminals.

World-Check announced Monday that Homeland Security had contracted with the firm on a test basis to give it access to the company's database of individuals and businesses believed to be involved in illicit financial activity. The software culls data from a variety of sources to help provide links between certain individuals and companies that investigators can use.

David Leppan, World-Check's chief executive and founder, said the database can be used to help investigators get more use out of banks' suspicious-activity reports.

"Humans cannot deal with the sheer magnitude of SARs that are coming in," Mr. Leppan said in an interview. "People can't turn that around quick enough to get a response out to a financial institution, 'We found this, we are concerned and we would like to monitor it.' That is one of the biggest issues that enforcement agencies around the world have been facing."

Mr. Leppan said that using his company's software, Homeland Security could match any information it finds in SARs against the database. He emphasized, however, that the company does not have access to any SARs, and only provides its own database to Homeland Security and other clients.

World-Check says its database is updated twice daily and uses about 140,000 public sources. Those include press reports, publicly available arrest records, and sanction lists, Mr. Leppan said.

What makes the database unique, he said, is that it links individuals and corporate entities, so that a company or enforcement agency using it might know what shell companies a terrorist has used, known associates of that company, and other data.

This "connects the dots within open source information and provides it in a highly structured database," Mr. Leppan said. "You get this spider web of global relationships between movers and shakers, power people, your arms dealers, etc."

World-Check said it serves more than 800 institutions, including regulatory and government agencies in more than 110 countries.

Two versions of the database are for sale. One is an online service that allows several users to access it for a premium per year. Typical prices range from \$3,000 per person per year to \$8,000 for five users.

The other version can be integrated with a company's internal processes. The cost depends on the company's size and how it wants to use the product.