

Website leaves one fewer place to hide

SIR MARK THATCHER and Simon Mann both appear on an intelligence database used by more than 180 Channel Island businesses.

The duo have both been prosecuted on charges relating to an attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea, the subject of an ongoing case in Guernsey's courts.

The programme has been developed by World-Check and allows investigators to match financial transactions against a list of people and firms with suspected ties to terrorist financing, drug trafficking and money laundering.

It is used locally by businesses, the Guernsey Financial Services Commission and the Financial Intelligence Service and is now

by Tracey Ellis

being tested by America's Department of Homeland Security.

Chief executive officer David Leppan said that it correlated public information in a structured format in a 'joining the dots' way.

It is not a 'blacklist' and includes diplomats and influential people.

Sir Mark was on the list as a 'politically-exposed person' because of his mother, former prime minister Baroness Thatcher, and his business dealings in South Africa.

Mann was included five years ago after a UK parliamentary

investigation into the Sandline mercenary affair, a political crisis involving the Papua New Guinea government.

The country signed a \$46m. contract with Sandline to provide mercenaries and military equipment to conduct offensive operations against separatists in Bougainville.

Sandline subcontracted the work to Executive Outcomes, a



■ ON THE LIST: Sir Mark Thatcher.

South African company founded by Mann that has since been banned in the country after complaints about its operations.

Mr Leppan said that the list was under constant review and that names could be put on one day and removed the next.

'We monitor the situation constantly and we have probably been approached on about 10 occasions by people or their lawyers asking about what we hold on them,' he said.

Details are released and corrected if wrong, he said.

First created in 2000 to meet the requirements of Swiss financial institutions, it covers more than 220 countries and territories worldwide. The company gained

its first local client in 2001.

It relies on data from some 140,000 sources, including lists of banned financiers, news reports and court filings.

In early 2002, the company added to its high-risk list a terror suspect in south east Asia, Hambali.

A few months later he was added to a US list of banned foreigners. Hambali was captured in Thailand last year and is currently in American custody, accused of organising the Bali terrorist attacks in October 2002.

The list has already been criticised by a privacy group in America, which said that there was a danger people would end up on it accidentally.