

SOFiE Services



SOFiE Sort Batch	
Date	Version
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Description of a SOFiE Sort Batch environment * Implementation examples * Price list 	



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1. Introduction

The SOFiE application was developed by Cetrel company in order to answer several tenders and offer a solution to secure transmissions of sensitive data between Cetrel and customers.

SOFiE has an automatic configuration mode commonly called « SOFiE Batch ». In the past, this mode of configuration was implemented in several large companies having an important flow of data, mainly with the assistance of Cetrel.

Cetrel-Securities, aware of the increasing data flows transiting through SOFiE, decided to go on ahead and offer to all of its customers a full range of dedicated services including the setup of a SOFiE Sort batched environment.

The purpose of this document is to clarify the benefits of a SOFiE batch implementation compared to the interactive mode (GUI), from the user's point of view as from the technical one (IT). This document will help the reader to understand the utility and/or the benefits of such a solution.

Finally, we have included a detailed FAQ answering a series of questions and detailing the optional services we offer.

2. What's new for users

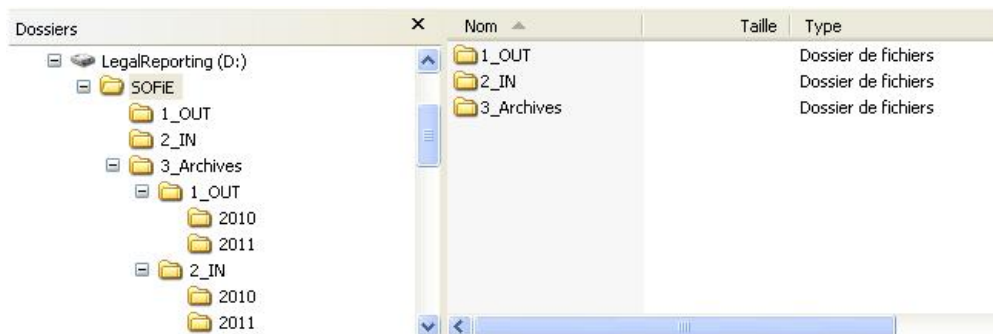
Over time, the volume of data passing through this secure channel has increased. Henceforth, the use of SOFiE application became, for many, a daily task.

A SOFiE batch environment reduces user's interactions and actions to a minimum :

- No more login, execution or use of the application.
- Users do not see anymore the application which becomes transparent.

Using the application comes down to the deposit of file(s) in a specific directory and the verification of received files in another directory.

Below a practical and concrete example :



Users copy the Legal Reporting files in the SOFiE's Out directory :

D:\SOFiE\1_OUT

... and verify the presence of the returned files in the incoming directory :

D:\SOFiE\2_IN

In addition, SOFiE systematically carries out a backup of any file sent, this copy can be placed in the selected directory. In our example it is « **D:\SOFiE\3_Archives\1_OUT** » - freedom of choice then to classify these reports according to convenience. For instance, a subdirectory per years which can split up into months, type of report, etc.

Management of user rights on the directory structure may be required when the application is shared by several departments and that some reports contains sensitive information.

3. What's new on IT side

A light infrastructure has to be set up : 1 or 2 SOFiE Batch dedicated servers, or even shared with other services. Many configuration options are possible depending on the choices made.

The main option is to choose between a full batch or half-batch environment.

If you hesitate, we suggest to proceed gradually. It's possible to "batch" first the SOFiE Transport user, then move toward a full batch if appropriated.

Direct benefits of a full batch environment :

- Automated task – time-saver.
- No user training to the application.
- No more user's handling errors.
- No more local installations or user's workstation maintenance during updates.
- Centralized application, access to the application is limited to some directories.
- Application's know-how is now only under the responsibility of the IT department.

File's workflow can be summarized as the following :

Sending :

- Original file (A) placed in directory C1 –OUT directory
- Crypt => Crypted file (A+) placed in the C2 directory
- FTPS => Crypted file (A+) copied from C2 to directory T1
- Transport => File A+ crypted again (A++) and sent to Cetrel's server

Receiving :

- Transport => Feedback file B++ downloaded and decrypted (B+) in T2 directory
- FTPS => Feedback file (B+) copied from T2 to directory C3
- Crypt => Feedback file (B+) decrypted and placed in C4 directory – IN directory

Cx = directory on the Crypt server, or accessible from it

Tx = directory on the Transport server, or accessible from it

In the 2 following examples we do not detail the automated workflow but present it from the user's point of view, describing the remaining actions users have to perform

Important notice : *in our 2 examples we respect the CSSF Circular 08/334 which states that the Crypt user must, practically, be isolated or protected from any intrusion into your computer network, unlike the SOFiE Transport user which has to communicate outside the network.*

Thus, the two accounts can not theoretically coexist on the same machine, a internal solution must be implemented to pass the reports between the two SOFiE accounts.

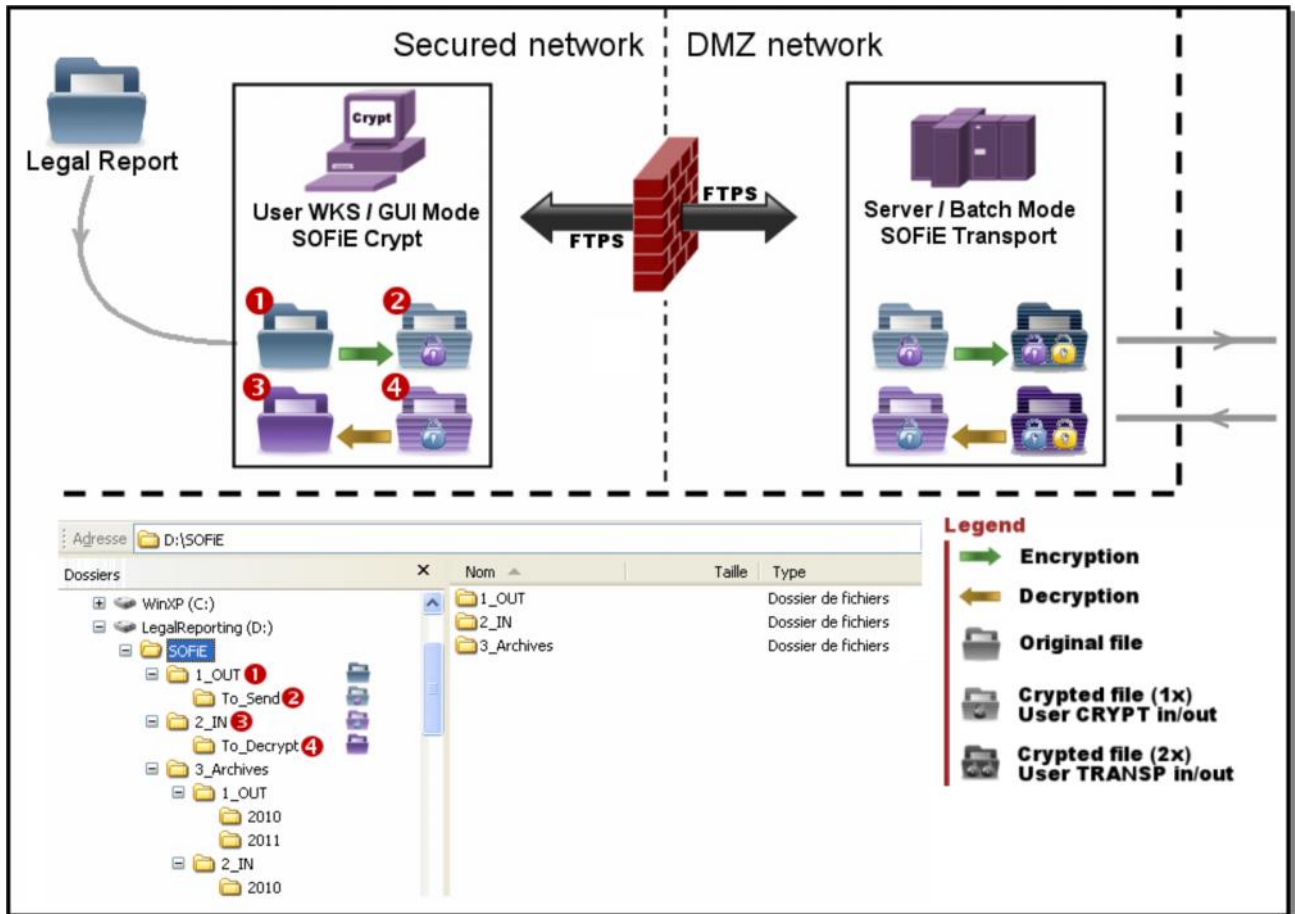
For example : a script executed from a server within the LAN, under a precise or dedicated account, which launches an FTPS transfer to copy files from the Crypt to Transport server and vice-versa (Transport server is placed in a DMZ or a less secure area of your network)

Example A : Half-batch – Transport’s batch

The users still have to use SOFiE Crypt to encrypt their reports.

Once crypted, a dedicated script (FTPS) transfers the files to the “OUT” directory of the Transport server which automatically treats and sends them.

Feedback files are automatically downloaded by the Transport server. As for sending, a script transfers these files from the “IN” directory of the Transport to the selected directory – preferably a directory easily accessible by the users who handles the Crypt account.



In practice for the user :

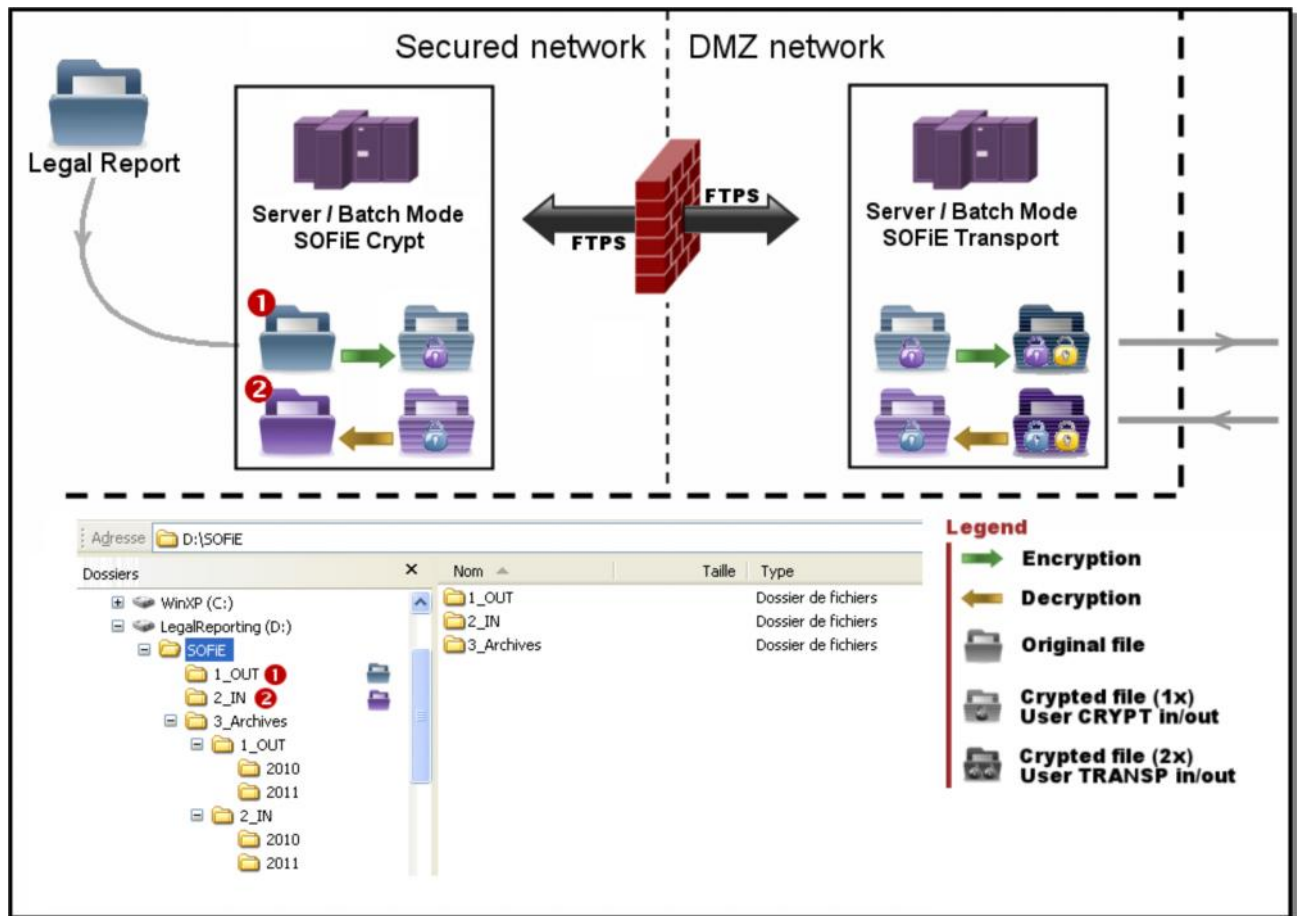
- 1 Original report file to encrypt placed in D:\SOFiE\1_OUT
- 2 User encrypts the file which is placed in D:\SOFiE\1_OUT\To_Send
Auto : *FTPS* script copy the crypted file from the Crypt to the Transport server
Auto : *SOFiE Transport batch* sends the file and retrieves any feedback file available
Auto : *FTPS* script copy the feedback crypted file from the Transport to the Crypt server
- 4 User decrypts the file located in D:\SOFiE\2_IN\To_Decrypt
- 3 User verifies the feedback file in D:\SOFiE\2_IN.

Example B : Full-batch - Crypt and Transport

The users do not interact anymore with the SOFiE application.

Within the minutes following the deposit of the file in the “OUT” directory, the automated data processing sequence takes over until the sending of the file by SOFiE Transport.

Same automation for the feedback files, the user has only to verify their presence in the directory « IN » and eventually controls them.



In practice for the user :

- 1 Original report file to encrypt and send placed in D:\SOFiE\1_OUT
Auto : SOFiE Crypt batch treats and encrypts the file
Auto : FTPS script copies the crypted file from the Crypt to the Transport server
Auto : SOFiE Transport batch sends the file and retrieves any feedback file available
Auto : FTPS script copies the feedback crypted file from the Transport to the Crypt server
Auto : SOFiE Crypt batch decrypts the file and places it in D:\SOFiE\2_IN
- 2 User verifies the feedback file in D:\SOFiE\2_IN.

4. FAQ

Can I use a virtual machine for the SOFiE servers ?

Yes, with the advantage to facilitate the implementation of a DRP server if required.

Is it mandatory to use a Windows server OS for SOFiE Batch ?

No, SOFiE Batch can just as easily run on a single workstation that is part of the list of compatible systems.

Can I control the SOFiE Batch updates ?

Yes, there are different ways to do so. However, Cetrel recommends to let the application updates as soon as a new version is available.

Is it simple to downgrade and come back to an older version of the application ?

Yes, it just needs to move some files and copy a directory.

Who performs these implementations ?

The services are provided by Alexandre Thilmany of U IT. SOFiE expert within Cetrel's helpdesk since more than 3 years, he works now in close collaboration with Cetrel and Cetrel-Securities in order to offer to all customers a range of services specifically dedicated to the SOFiE application.

Does SOFiE also backup/archive the feedback files ?

Yes, SOFiE will make a backup of a file which must still be decrypted, **but** the decrypted file (and thus readable) will only have one copy placed in the output directory.

Practically: without needing to develop custom scripts, SOFiE maintains an archive of all feedback files in encrypted format. These files can, if necessary, be decrypted again manually

When using SOFiE in GUI mode and when users open the window to crypt or decrypt files, can we configure the default directory SOFiE will open ?

No, SOFiE doesn't include this option. The default directory opened is the "data" directory of the logged account (..\sofie\data\99990xxxx\)

Note: this option was proposed to the development and is under consideration.

Some users need to use the SOFiE Crypt account in order to generate some specific reports, or to test new reports. Is it possible to setup a GUI-based environment without disturbing the batch environment ?

Yes, there are various way to implement it without disrupting the batch environment. We advise to use a copy of the SOFiE profil and centralized it for all the Crypt users. Users just need to respect the rule of not changing the password.

We offer the installation of a centralized SOFiE GUI environment. Please read further explanations in the FAQ below.

If a SOFiE GUI user enters 3 times a bad password, does it block the batch environment ?

No, a SOFiE account can't be blocked. After three unsuccessful attempts in GUI mode, the application closes. It just need to be restarted and try to log in again.

How SOFiE is scheduled ?

Two choices are possible :

Use SOFiE's own scheduler.

Use an external/system scheduler.

Each solution has its advantages and disadvantages. This is expected to be discussed at the meeting preceding the installation of the environment.

Does SOFiE need a lot of system resources ?

No, SOFiE uses a few system resources. Process is mainly sleeping between activities. However, if the size of some files to be send exceed 1Mo, it's preferable to carry out a speed and performance test during activity (encryption & decryption) to ensure that processing times are corrects. In the case of a shared server, it is advised to verify the impact on other services offered by the server when processing large files.

We have different departments that need to send files via SOFiE. In return, can SOFiE classify and place these files in different directories according to the name (dispatch the feedback files) ?

No, SOFiE has a unique directory where it deposits files once decrypted. This function remains possible through custom scripts that U IT is able to develop on request.

Can I have a more detailed explanation of the different options proposed ?

FTP Package A

Setting up the secure FTP (Package A)

Creation and implementation of a batch script to transfer the manually encrypted files from SOFiE Crypt to SOFiE Transport batch and vice versa.

To be considered only if the Package A is chosen. Included in Package B.

Report

Installation report

Technical document which summarize the SOFiE Batch installation and configuration. Very detailed, it proves to be useful when looking for problems (it can be sent to Cetrel's helpdesk), and is the ideal document when SOFiE is managed by a team, or for a transfer of knowledge.

Note : This report is provided in both PDF and MS Word format in order to be able to edit it in case of changes

Chart

A3 document - Diagram of the SOFiE workflow

We propose it in A3 format, color and plasticized.

Visual diagram of the implemented solution (servers, files, directories, scripts, ...)

GUI Environnement

Installation of SOFiE GUI multi-users & centralized

SOFiE in GUI mode may be necessary for the creation of specific reports, or for testing purposes when new types of reports are requested by the regulators. Typically, only the Crypt account has to be set up, but it's possible to setup also the Transport account in GUI mode in order to provide a complete backup solution in case of problem with the batch environment.

The centralized installation is a copy of the SOFiE batch profile(s) which has various implementation options (shared profil, terminal server, Citrix, VMWare)

IT Training

Technical training to SOFiE

Training to SOFiE support specific to the implemented environment. Explanation of the operating processes, common problems resolution, advices and recommendations according to the environment and the available tools.

4h training on site, no limit to the number of participants.

Note : user's training possible (GUI environnement)

Consolidation

Implementation of a backup solution, DRP

Design and implementation of a functional backup of the batch environment.

Since this type of solution depends entirely on the environment in place and the available tools, it is not possible for us to evaluate the costs without discussing it.

Key points : data synchronisation with production, scripts/jobs/scheduler/... duplications, reports redirection, security, tests, documentation.

Activity recording

Implementation of an historical tool of sent files

Advanced script with a menu allowing to generate some activity reports or statistics on all files processed by SOFiE Batch. It's possible to automate it.

The script is modified and customized to the environment, then tested and validated.

According to the wishes, it can offer a various range of flow informations.

Note : this tool can also be installed for a centralized GUI environment.

Monitoring

Implementation of a SOFiE Batches monitoring tool

Another advanced script which monitors SOFiE activity. Current processes, IN/OUT directories, error directories, logs, FTP.

Basically, it can be configured to send alerts via email (one email account must be dedicated and configured) and/or generate error report files or FLAG files in a specific directory. The script is adaptable according to the needs.

IT Tool

Implementation of a level 1 support tool

This section is point to discussion considering the various options.

Wheter an advanced script proposing a menu allowing to carry out various actions and checks of the environment like:

- All the options given by the monitoring tool

- Process control (start/stop)

- Fast access to configuration files, directories

- Disk space monitoring, network availability, resources, line connectivity

- Electronic certificates validity

- Integrity of the SOFiE directory structure and the critical files

- Open logs, error parsing, automatic sending of logs to Cetrel or U IT

- Etc.

Wheter an XLS type document gathering all the technical settings and options of the whole batch environment as well as a series of hyperlinks to pen specific directories or logs. Especially useful for a company owning multiple SOFiE accounts on the same server and sharing support within several employees.

I have another SOFiE account, used for Cetrel / Seculine / Other. Can I consider to install it on the same server ?

Yes, and we advise to install all your SOFiE accounts on the same servers. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any question.