



Our Reference:
Your Ref:

15 June 2006

Richard Thomas
Information Commissioner
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Dear Richard

Thank you for your letter dated 10 May 2006, enclosing a copy of your report *What price privacy? The unlawful trade in confidential personal information*.

Ofcom is committed to protecting people's privacy and to processing their personal information in a manner which meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. It is for these reasons that Ofcom is willing to condemn unequivocally the commission of offences under section 55 of the Act.

Whilst compliance with the Act is a matter for our stakeholders, we will be happy to publicise your report on our website. We will also be happy to provide you with details of the steps Ofcom has taken, and is taking, to raise awareness of data protection compliance across our organisation, with the aim, amongst others, of improving our control or influence over the buying and selling of personal information.

Yours ever

David Currie
Chairman

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What price privacy? The unlawful trade in confidential personal information

What price privacy? The unlawful trade in confidential personal information (PDF, 1.3Mb)
Published by the Information Commissioner's Office May 2006

This report from the Information Commissioner, Richard Thomas, highlights the extent of trade in illegally obtained personal information and sets out his deep concern that confidential information can be too easily obtained improperly from public and private organisations, which can cause significant harm and distress to individuals.

The Information Commissioner is using special powers under the Data Protection Act to present this report to Parliament exposing the nature of this unlawful trade. He is calling for prison sentences of up to two years for the illegal buying and selling of personal information.

The Information Commissioner has identified Ofcom among a number of regulatory and professional organisations which appear to be in a position to exercise control or influence over those who may engage in the buying or selling of personal information. He has asked these bodies to take steps to raise awareness of the existing law, and to deter illegal conduct at any point in the chain.

Ofcom is committed to protecting people's privacy and to processing their personal information in a manner which meets the requirements of the Act. It is for these reasons that Ofcom is willing to condemn unequivocally the illegal buying and selling of personal information.

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