



Information Commissioner's Office
Promoting public access to official information
and protecting your personal information

Press Release

For immediate release

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Privacy notices must be consumer friendly, says ICO

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is today launching its new Privacy Notices [Code of Practice](#) that will help organisations provide more user-friendly privacy and marketing notices. The ICO wants to see an end to the confusing privacy notices that are written to protect organisations rather than to inform the public.

Earlier this year, the ICO called for an overhaul of privacy notices after consumer research (footnote) revealed that half of consumers don't understand what they're signing up to when they fill in online and paper forms. It became clear to the ICO that too many companies baffle customers with lengthy and unnecessary legalese.

Iain Bourne, Head of Data Protection Projects at the ICO, said: "The new Code of Practice places the emphasis on language to ensure privacy notices are understandable to the people they are aimed at. Organisations must use personal information in a way people would expect.

"Individuals must also empower themselves by ensuring they understand exactly what they're agreeing to when filling in online or paper forms. The Code of Practice will help businesses to develop a higher level of trust and a better relationship with the people they collect information about. There is also a leaflet for members of the public, telling them what they can expect and what to do if their information is misused."

By developing a new Code of Practice, the ICO hopes it will end the reputation of privacy notices being impenetrable. Privacy notices are an important way to inform individuals and ensure that organisations are open about how they use personal information.

The ICO offers lots of practical help to consumers looking to protect their personal information. Visit www.ico.gov.uk for the Personal Information Toolkit or take the ICO's Personal Information Healthcheck for tailored advice on managing your personal information.

The ICO conducted a three month consultation process on a draft code which received overwhelming support.

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If you need more information, please contact the ICO press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: www.ico.gov.uk

Notes to Editors

1. The Information Commissioner's Office promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is the UK's independent influential and practical authority on information rights and responsibilities, making a difference to people.
2. The ICO has specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
3. Organisations can now sign the Personal Information Promise to demonstrate their commitment to protecting people's personal information by visiting the website at www.ico.gov.uk
4. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk
5. Anyone who processes personal information must comply with eight principles, which make sure that personal information is:
 - Fairly and lawfully processed
 - Processed for limited purposes
 - Adequate, relevant and not excessive
 - Accurate and up to date
 - Not kept for longer than is necessary
 - Processed in line with your rights
 - Secure
 - Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection