

Press Release

For immediate release

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New rules for privacy online

Organisations that flout privacy online risk a double whammy of enforcement action by the Information Commissioner's Office and the loss of trust from customers. In a major speech on privacy protection today, Christopher Graham, the Information Commissioner, appealed to businesses, charities and public bodies to be straight with consumers so that people know why their personal information is being collected, how it will be used and who else may end up seeing it.

Launching the '[Personal information online code of practice](#)' - the first guidance document of its kind – Christopher Graham said: "The benefits of the internet age are clear: the chance to make more contacts, quicker transactions and greater convenience. But there are risks too. A record of our online activity can reveal our most personal interests. Get privacy right and you will retain the trust and confidence of your customers and users; mislead consumers or collect information you don't need and you are likely to diminish customer trust and face enforcement action from the ICO."

Organisations that adhere to the good practice tips in the Code of Practice will enable consumers to make an informed choice about whether they sign up for a particular online service. Keeping out of date records or not holding personal information securely help nobody and could result in enforcement action.

Christopher Graham added: "Organisations must be transparent so that consumers can make online privacy choices and see how their information will be used. Individuals can take control by checking their privacy settings and being careful about the amount of personal details they post to social networking sites and elsewhere online."

A [guide](#) for consumers is published alongside the Code giving advice on avoiding online scams, the importance of being cautious about who you are disclosing information to and using privacy settings effectively.

ENDS

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. Christopher Graham is speaking at the Privacy Laws and Business conference in Cambridge.
2. Specific materials have also been developed for small businesses.
3. The Information Commissioner's Office upholds information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.
4. 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
5. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can find us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ICOnews
6. 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