

Press Release

19 November 2010

Google signs commitment to improve data handling

Google Inc. has signed a commitment to improve data handling to ensure breaches like the collection of WiFi payload data by Google Street View vehicles do not occur again, the Information Commissioner said today.

Senior Vice President of Google, Alan Eustace, has signed an [undertaking](#) on behalf of Google Inc. which commits the company to putting into place improved training measures on security awareness and data protection issues for all employees. The company has also said it will require its engineers to maintain a privacy design document for every new project before it is launched. The payload data that Google inadvertently collected in the UK will also be deleted.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) will conduct a full audit of Google's internal privacy structure, privacy training programs and its system of privacy reviews for new products. The audit will take place within nine months of the undertaking being signed.

Information Commissioner, Christopher Graham, said:

"I am very pleased to have a firm commitment from Google to work with my office to improve its handling of personal information. We don't want another breach like the collection of payload data by Google Street View vehicles to occur again.

“It is a significant achievement to have an undertaking from a major multinational corporation like Google Inc. that extends to its global policies and not just its UK activities.

“We will be keeping a close watch on the progress Google makes and will follow up with an extensive audit. Meanwhile, I welcome the fact that the WiFi payload data that should never have been collected in the first place can, at last, be deleted.”

ENDS

If you need more information, please contact the ICO press office on 0303 123 9070 or visit the website at: www.ico.gov.uk.

Notes to Editors

1. The undertaking that Google Inc. has signed is available on the ICO website here: http://www.ico.gov.uk/~media/documents/library/Data_Protection/Notices/google_inc_undertaking.ashx
2. The Information Commissioner’s Office upholds information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Anyone who processes personal information must comply with eight principles of the Data Protection Act, 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