

Global Data & Privacy Update

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Google asks court to reject privacy lawsuit from Mosley

Google has asked the High Court in London to dismiss a lawsuit brought by the former Formula One president, Max Mosley, regarding the availability of images of him with five women at a sex party. The newspaper who obtained the images was found to have breached Mr Mosley's privacy rights in publishing the material but the images have remained online. In his legal action, Mr Mosley alleges that the search engine has misused private information and breached the Data Protection Act. Google wants the claim to be struck out on grounds that the search engine is not a publisher of the images and the fact that Mr Mosley has remained in the public eye.

Introduction of "snoopers charter" questioned by ICO

UK Prime Minister David Cameron has pledged to re-introduce a communications data bill dubbed the "snoopers charter", requiring phone and internet companies to maintain detailed records of their customers' activities in the wake of increasing terror attacks. Information Commissioner, Christopher Graham, has called for careful analysis before such decisions are made and called for a British equivalent of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, which advises the US President on privacy issues.

Merkel urges EU to resolve air passengers' data spat

Following last week's attacks in France, German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on EU lawmakers to re-examine their position on data privacy which has held up legislation on exchanging passenger data since 2011. In November, a civil-liberties committee blocked the latest draft law which would share passengers' full travel itineraries, saying it needed more time to assess data protection issues.

Obama details cyber-security plan

US President Barack Obama has used his speeches this week to highlight the need for greater cyber-security, including greater protections for consumers and children. One area of his cyber-security plan that has been criticised is the proposed information-sharing system. Privacy groups have argued that the existing rules already allow companies to coordinate sufficiently and the proposals will give too much power to law enforcement agencies.

CAC closes 50 websites in online crackdown

The Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) said in a statement on its website that it has closed 50 websites and social media accounts for a variety of violations. It is reported that the government is pursuing a crackdown on unwanted material online. In 2014, the authorities allegedly received nearly 11 million reports of "harmful information" online.

"Super cookies" follow you into privacy mode

A security feature called HTTP Strict Transport Security (HSTS) was designed to increase security by remembering when users access a website via a secure connection. It plants so called "super cookies" that can be used to track online activity, even when in "private browsing" mode. Sam Greenhalgh, the independent researcher who revealed this, said that he hasn't seen this flaw exploited yet, but now that this method is public knowledge, there's nothing to stop companies from doing so.

Cyber-attack is third biggest risk for UK firms

According to the Allianz Risk Barometer 2015, UK businesses now consider potential cyber-attacks to be their third biggest risk. Following a year of numerous high-profile attacks, this is the first time that cyber-attacks has been in the top five and follows business disruption and loss of reputation or brand value. Globally, cyber-crime was ranked fifth.

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