

Global Data & Privacy Update

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UK government to clamp down on cold callers

From 6 April 2015 it will be easier to pursue companies who make cold calls and send nuisance texts. This is because the controversial requirement that the call/text must cause "substantial damage or substantial distress" is being removed. In 2014, the ICO received more than 175,000 complaints about cold calling. However, they were unable to take the relevant action to pursue offenders as it is difficult to show the distress required. It is hoped that this change in law will lead to more enforcement actions as the ICO can impose fines of up to GBP 500,000.

Italian DPA to conduct inspections at Google US offices

Garante, the Italian DPA, has announced that it will make Google the subject of regular checks, for the first time in Europe. The objective of these checks is to monitor the progress in bringing its platform in line with Italian legislation to protect users' privacy. In contrast to the two year review stipulated by the UK's ICO, the Italian protocol requires quarterly updates and empowers the Garante to conduct on-the-spot checks at Google's US headquarters.

Lenovo suffers cyber-attack

After the highly publicised claims that the "Superfish bug" found on Lenovo computers left PCs vulnerable to an SSL spoofing cyberattack, the Chinese computer maker itself became a victim of a cyber-attack yesterday. The Lizard Squad claimed responsibility for the attack which redirected traffic from the Lenovo website. Lenovo issued an official apology earlier in the week for installing the Superfish advertising software on its computers.

AT&T offers privacy for a price

As AT&T continues to roll out its 1 gigabit-per-second "GigaPower" service, it has been revealed that users who want to opt out of sharing certain information have to pay an additional monthly fee. Customers not paying the fee are automatically signed up for the Internet Preferences Analytic Program, giving AT&T permission to access web browsing information and pass details on to third parties.

Canadian DPAs consider body-worn cameras

In a joint initiative by all Canadian Privacy Commissioners, a guidance document has been issued this week, which advises law enforcement agencies to consider privacy and personal information protection before adopting body-worn cameras. Canada currently has no specific provisions regulating the technology, although a controversial surveillance bill is currently being debated in the House of Commons as part of anti-terrorism legislation.

Australian privacy commission to audit privacy policies

The Australian privacy commission has announced that it will audit 21 privacy policies published by selected Australian entities. This is to ensure that they meet all of the obligations of the Australian Privacy Principle 1, the new legislation which came into effect last year. The names of the 21 entities will not be released until the assessment has been completed, which is expected in May. Any privacy breaches could attract fines of up to AUD 1.7 million.

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