

# Privacy & Data Protection

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## Headlines

- EU privacy watchdogs begin probe of Microsoft, p.17
- Germany orders changes to Facebook real name policy, p.18
- One stop shop likely to stay, p.19

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## Regulator derides public sector for unacceptable data losses

The UK regulator is to meet with representatives from local government bodies in a bid to address what it has called an “underlying problem” with local government’s approach to data protection.

The Information Commissioner’s Office (‘ICO’) made the announcement after it reported that it had served new civil monetary penalty notices to two separate local authorities in England over serious breaches of the Data Protection Act.

Devon County Council and the London Borough of Lewisham were fined

£90,000 and £70,000, respectively, for their breaches. Both bodies sent sensitive personal data to the incorrect recipient. At Devon County Council, a social worker who had been preparing an ‘adopting panel report’ sent out an alternative file that was being used as a template to the wrong family. The papers featured information about 22 individuals and contained details of alleged criminal offences and mental and physical health.

In the London Borough of Lewisham’s case, a social worker left files containing GP and police reports,

and allegations of sexual abuse and neglect, in a shopping bag on a train. The social worker had taken the documents home to work on.

The ICO has issued fines totalling £1,885,000 to nineteen local authorities over breaches of the DPA since the Commissioner’s power to fine came into force in April 2010. Christopher Graham said that the bodies had been guilty of “failing to have the most straightforward of procedures in place”.

He said: “It would be far too easy to consider these

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## Report recommends tightening data protection law to protect privacy

Lord Justice Leveson has published his eagerly awaited report into the culture, practices and ethics of the press, making far reaching recommendations about the Data Protection Act.

Leveson has recommended several important changes to the DPA, along with some key changes to the role of the Information

Commissioner’s Office.

With regard to the former, Leveson recommends a narrowing of section 32 of the DPA, which restricts the circumstances in which the UK regulator can exercise most of its powers in relation to the press. The change would render it more difficult for those organisations processing data for the

purposes of publication to bring themselves within the scope of section 32 exemption.

The Report recommends that the power of the ICO to prosecute should be extended to include any offence which also constitutes a breach of the Data Protection Principles and that the ICO should con-

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