



Privacy & Data Protection

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- The States bugged Diana, p.14
- Johnson decision imminent, p.15
- Microsoft wins electronic privacy case, p.15

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UK Commissioner names and shames media companies

In a new report to Parliament the UK Information Commissioner, Richard Thomas, has named media publications that have purchased people's personal information in search of a story.

The report, published in mid-December, names mainly tabloid newspapers, but also some periodicals, broadsheets and magazines. The list was assembled following Operation Motorman, which led to prosecutions of private investigators. In that operation, which has been reported in previous editions of this journal, the Commissioner's staff un-

covered numerous invoices addressed to newspapers and magazines detailing prices for providing their journalists with pieces of personal information.

Altogether, 305 journalists were identified as recipients of a wide range of information. Mr Thomas, said, "I repeat my call for a two year jail term to deter those convicted of trading unlawfully in personal information... The Identity Cards Act 2006 provides the blueprint with a two year custodial sentence for those unlawfully disclosing information. The same

deterrent is needed to protect far more sensitive information such as bank accounts, phone bills and health and criminal records.

"People care about their personal privacy and have a right to expect that their personal details remain confidential. Who they are, where they live, who their friends and family are, how they run their lives: these are all private matters. Individuals may choose to divulge such information to others, but information about them held confidentially should not be available to anyone

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Crackdown on private detectives and those who instruct them

Following the recent prosecution of a couple for data theft, the UK Information Commissioner has announced a crackdown on one of the UK's fastest growing illegal trades.

A husband and wife team, who traded as 'Analysis and Business Research,' and who allegedly made £140,000 per year from trading in fraudulently obtained personal information, were convicted of breaching section 55 of the UK Data Protection Act.

Sharon and Stephen Anderson, who had made a career out of making bogus calls to extract personal data on behalf of their clients, pleaded guilty to the charge and were ordered to pay £14,800 in fines and costs.

The couple may have received a custodial sentence if their prosecution had taken place next year, when the government is expected to change the maximum

punishment for breaching the Data Protection Act from a fine to two years imprisonment.

The couple were engaged by a private detective agency, who in turn had been instructed by law firm Mishcon de Reya, to target a business tycoon. Sharon Anderson deceived the Sky TV call centre into giving her information about the bank of a subscriber called David Hughes.

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