



Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

DVLA
Longview Road
Swansea
SA6 7JL

HMP Britain
Request-18600-f362b529@whatdotheyknow.com

Telephone
Fax
Textphone
Email
Website www.direct.gov.uk/motoring

Your Ref
Our Ref FOIR 1692/09

Date: 05 October 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

Freedom of Information

We are writing in response to your request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) which was received on 29 September.

You wrote:- **I have recently seen a television advertisement from Car Spotters. This service allows a customer to send a text from a mobile phone, and for a fee of £3, it will send you information on the car such as its year of manufacture, date of first register, its acceleration performance, top speed etc. It is my understanding that this service uses a local database to establish these figures. That is to say, the service interrogates a database supplied by the DVLA and held on the service provider's computers and not a database held at the DVLA.**

You requested :-

1. What is the nature of the database used by this and other such services?

This information is held. This is an anonymised set of vehicle data that contains no personal details. The data is supplied to five companies who use it to provide products to a range of companies usually in addition to data supplied by the police, the motor insurance industry and car valuation data.

The data is used to ensure correct identification of vehicle replacement parts or products including brakes, exhausts, batteries and spark plugs. In addition, the data is used to power customer websites, e.g. insurance companies, so that members of public enter their car registration and the vehicle fields are pre-populated. Also, for a potential buyer to check the history of a vehicle that they are thinking of buying to make sure it hasn't been cloned or written off, check the mileage, value, etc.



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Part of the product advises when there has been a keeper change or the number plate has changed as a result of a cherished transfer. This allows companies to identify that there has been a change but does not give the personal details of the keepers.

2. What are the licensing terms?

This data is supplied to five companies who are allowed to use it for reasonable enquiries as described above. The data is sold at a cost recovery level of £80,000 per annum.

3. Please send me a copy of the database(s) sold to these services.

This information is exempt by virtue of Section 21(2)(a) of the FOIA. That is, it is reasonably accessible to you even though it is accessible on payment. The anonymised information sold to these companies is a commercial product and is not available free of charge.

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research you are doing and for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

Most documents supplied by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency will have been produced by government officials and will be Crown Copyright. You can find details on the arrangements for re-using Crown copyright on the Office of Public Sector Information website at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/click-use/index.htm>.

If you are unhappy with the decisions made by this Agency in relation to your request, you may ask for an internal review. If you wish to complain, you should write to foi@dvla.gsi.gov.uk quoting the above reference number.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please see attached details of the complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us at the postal or e-mail address, quoting the reference above.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information
DVLA