
From:
Sent: 02 July 2009 12:46
To:
Cc:
Subject: RE: Phorm e-petition [UNCLASSIFIED] [Non-Record]

Hi

BERR (now BIS) took this forward.

Kind regards

From:
Sent: 02 July 2009 12:27
To:
Cc:
Subject: Phorm e-petition
Importance: High

All,

Forgive the wide spread of this email. I have obtained your details by _____ who was involved in the Maguire e-petition.

Having recently joined the MoJ, I am looking for the information on which Govt department led on dealing with the Govt response to the PHORM e-petition. I am responding to an MC and need lines on the dealing of this e-petition and would be grateful of which department took this forward.

See below for details of e-petition and lines of Govt response:

"We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to stop ISP's from breaching customers privacy via advertising technologies."

Details of Petition:

"We petition the Prime Minister to investigate the Phorm technology and if found to breach UK or European privacy laws then ban all ISP's from adopting it's use. Additionally the privacy laws should be reviewed to cover any future technologies such as Phorm The UK's three largest ISP's, Virgin Media, BT and TalkTalk are all in talks with a view to introducing the Phorm technology. This would result in the browsing habits of the majority of the UK population being sold to a third party for advertising purposes. The opt out system for this technology is vague and unproven, even when opting out your every move on the Internet might be recorded. Surely this must be a breach of privacy laws, if not then the privacy laws need to be changed to cover such invasive technology."

Read the Government's response:

Thank you for the e-petition on internet advertising technologies and customer privacy.

As your petition states, some Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have been looking at the use of Phorm's Webwise and Open Internet Exchange (OIX) products. However, the only use of the technology so far has been the trials conducted by BT.

29/07/2009

Advertisers and ISPs need to ensure that they comply with all relevant data protection and privacy laws. It is also important that consumers' privacy is protected and that they are given sufficient information and opportunity to make a clear and informed decision whether to participate in services such as Phorm.

The Government is committed to ensuring that people's privacy is fully protected. Legislation is in place for this purpose and is enforced by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). ICO looked at this technology, to ensure that any use of Phorm or similar technology is compatible with the relevant privacy legislation. ICO has published its view on Phorm on its website:

http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/pressreleases/2008/new_phorm_statement_040408.pdf

ICO is an independent body, and it would not be appropriate for the Government to second guess its decisions. However, ICO has been clear that it will be monitoring closely all progress on this issue, and in particular any future use of Phorm's technology. They will ensure that any such future use is done in a lawful, appropriate and transparent manner, and that consumers' rights are fully protected.

If you could get this information back to me by close of today, I would be grateful as our Minister would like all questions posed in the MC, answered (and part of the MC refers to this e-petition). Happy to discuss any issues/concerns.

Many thanks,

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