



Department for Business Innovation & Skills

Information and Technology Directorate
(ITD)
Department for Business, Innovation &
Skills
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Nick Heath

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Our ref: FOI2015/08218

1 June 2015

Dear Mr Heath

Thank you for your email of 1 May 2105 where you requested the following information:

In your department:

How many computers are still running Windows XP?

When do you anticipate you will transition all of these XP machines to a new operating system? Which operating system are you switching these machines to?

What parts of the department are these machines mainly used in?

How are you securing the XP machines in the interim period before their operating system is replaced?

Have you taken out an Extended Support deal with Microsoft to update these XP machines?

What is the cost of this Extended Support deal?

When does this Extended Support deal expire?

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'), you have the right to:

- know whether we hold the information you require
- be provided with that information (subject to any exemptions under the Act which may apply).

Response

The Department confirms it holds some information falling within the description specified in your request. We consider that this information is exempt under Section 31 (Law enforcement) of the Act. This states that information is exempt if its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of a crime. Any attempt to gain unauthorised access to an IT system is a criminal offence, so the information you have requested is being withheld under Section 31(1)(a) of the Act. The exemption in Section 31 is a qualified exemption and is therefore subject to the balance of the public interest. This means that a public interest test must be carried out to determine whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

In favour of release, we acknowledge that disclosure of information regarding the operating systems of the Department's computer systems would provide assurance that the Department is protecting its IT systems appropriately and does not leave them unnecessarily vulnerable to attack.

However, in favour of not providing the information requested we consider that public confirmation of the version of operating system in use would provide information useful to those wishing to harm the Department's IT systems. This may enable them to continue their cyber-attacks, or may damage any attempt to identify them via law enforcement agencies. It would not be in the interest of the Department to provide specific information about the version of operating systems in use, as this could enable individuals to deduce how vulnerable or otherwise UK Government offices are to criminal cyber-attacks. This is not in the public interest. Having considered the public interest, the Department's decision is to withhold this information.

Appeals procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original request and should be addressed to the Information Rights Unit:

Information Rights Unit
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET
Email: FOI.Requests@bis.gsi.gov.uk

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

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. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely
Information and Technology Directorate (ITD)
BIS