



# INTERNATIONAL newsletter

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## in this issue

2 Privacy news worldwide  
USA, Australia, South Africa, UK,  
Canada, Netherlands, Spain, Workplace  
Privacy, Computer and Other Security  
Issues, State Powers, Health, Internet  
Privacy Management (also on p.18-23)

3 EC approves standard  
contractual clauses for data  
transfers to non-EU countries

4 European Parliament accepts  
Committee Report on  
ECHELON interceptions

6 Australia: 2001 update

9 Smarter CCTV attracts  
opposition and legal questions.

10 Australia: privacy an important  
factor in dealings with business

11 NZ Law Commission  
addresses Internet privacy  
and E-Commerce

12 PL&B Conference Reports:  
Making Privacy A Competitive  
Advantage, Netherlands, Germany  
Ireland, EU, USA, Hewlett Packard

17 Reviews

## *PL&B Services*

*PL&B Services* 7

*Training* 9

*PL&B online* 10

*Recruitment* 23

*Subscription form* 24

# Editorial

This issue of the PL&B International Newsletter highlights an eclectic, but important, mix of issues. An American judge and an Australian subsidiary of Siemens offer two different interpretations of employee workplace privacy rights (see page 18). Computer and commercial security issues come to the fore with the advent of a virus that secretly downloads and transmits files from an infected computer's hard drive (see page 18) and with a story about credit card security and e-commerce (see page 19). Microsoft's forthcoming operating system raises concerns about the amount of information that the company will hold about users' computers (see page 19).

EU businesses find out that they may have good reason to worry that the ECHELON intelligence network is being used to conduct commercial espionage (see page 4). Meanwhile, US banks fail to make the privacy grade (see page 22.)

Barriers to the collection of genetic information are rapidly collapsing, and a June resolution of the United Nations General Assembly addresses the need to protect confidentiality of health information – in this case, about HIV status – to prevent discrimination (see page 20).

The European Commission approves standard contractual clauses for the transfer of personal data to non-EU countries (see page 3). The Australian Privacy Commissioner announces the publication of research studies showing the importance of respecting consumer privacy (see page 10). Former US President Clinton's Chief Counselor for Privacy challenges estimates that the cost of complying with Internet privacy legislation will be unacceptably high (see page 17).

This newsletter also contains summaries of several presentations made at PL&B's 14th Annual International Conference, held in Cambridge in July (see pages 12-16).

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PRIVACY LAWS & BUSINESS