



INTERNATIONAL newsletter

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Editorial

This edition of *PL&B International* looks at the discussions in Brussels in early October about possible amendments to the EU Data Protection Directive (p.6). Other European issues include the European Commission's consultation into a proposed directive on workers' personal data (p.13), an EU consultation on data retention (p.12) and a ruling from the European Court of Human Rights on a case relating to denial of access to personal data in the UK (p.11). We also present a proposed solution to the problematic issue of cross border data protection compliance from the Netherlands-based privacy manager of Philips (p.8).

This issue also covers the evolution of the roles of business and government in collecting and analysing personal data for national security purposes. Organisations that have so carefully nurtured an atmosphere of trust with their customers may see that trust seriously undermined by ongoing talk in several countries of partnerships between government and the private sector in combating threats to security (p.16).

Threats to national security may be real, but the prospect of companies becoming the surveillance agents of government threatens to undermine another important value in democratic states – privacy. Businesses are increasingly burdened with the ethical, and legal, issues that flow from possessing huge stockpiles of personal information that may be of interest to government. When is it appropriate for governments to have access to that information in the name of a (sometimes ill-defined) public interest?

In this issue, we also learn how security concerns are driving Canada and the United States to develop sophisticated and intrusive means of monitoring travellers, sometimes using privately-held databases (p.21).

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PRIVACY LAWS & BUSINESS