REPORT
Public Awareness of Data Protection and Privacy Issues

6 January 2006

Prepared for: The Data Protection Commissioner
By

AD
Ref:41104753
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>(i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MANAGEMENT SUMMARY</strong></td>
<td>(ii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Privacy of Personal Information in Context</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Importance of Privacy for Various Types of Personal Information</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Privacy issues using the Internet</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Advertising Recall on Buses, Trains or Posters</td>
<td>9.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

This management report presents the findings from a survey undertaken on behalf of the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner by Lansdowne Market Research in November 2005.

The Office of the Data Protection Commissioner has undertaken research amongst the general public, with the following key objectives:

- To measure the level of importance that people attach to data protection and privacy issues.
- To measure the degree of importance attached to privacy issues when using the Internet.
- To assess overall awareness of the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner.
- To assess the level of awareness of recent advertising for the office of the Data Protection Commissioner.

A sample of 1,200 respondents aged 15+ were interviewed on the Lansdowne’s Omnibus Survey. This survey is designed to be representative (in terms of age, sex, social class, region and area) of the adult population aged 15 and over living in the Republic of Ireland. For the purposes of this research, we are focussing on adults aged 18+ (sample size of 1,071). Quality controls of the highest standard were imposed at all stages of the research, including a 20% quality control check on completed interviews. All respondents were interviewed face to face, in their own homes, by trained and experienced Lansdowne interviewers. Fieldwork was conducted between 30th October – 15th November 2005.

Previous research was undertaken in October 1997 and 2002 and where possible comparisons are shown.
Management Summary – Key Findings

- Results from the 2005 survey indicate that the importance of maintaining privacy in relation to personal information, using the Internet, and opposition to receiving unsolicited direct marketing continues to be areas of concern to Irish people.

- For comparable measures, the need for privacy of personal information is even more important to Irish people in 2005, continuing the upward trend seen in previous years.

- Encouragingly the depth of knowledge about Data Protection Commissioner has increased over time.

- Currently one in two Irish people are aware of the Data Protection Commissioner compared to two in five in 2002. In addition, the proportion of people who would complain to the Data Protection Commissioner’s office about invasion of privacy has increased significantly since 2002 and 1997 (2005-18%; 2002 8% and 1997 2%).

- Consistently across all measures, younger (18-24 year olds) and older people (50+), and those from lower socio economic groups display lowest levels of awareness, knowledge and perceived importance to personal privacy issues. Particular focus is required on these groups in order to reduce their exposure to data privacy risks, and raise awareness of the Data Protection Commissioner’s office overall.

- While the recent advertising campaign was effective in terms of being seen by one in four adults, particularly those who are aware of the Data Protection Commissioner (almost one in two); it impacted more on 25-49 year olds and ABC1’s than those who are more exposed to privacy of personal information risks (younger and older age groups and C2DE’s).
Specific Measures

- Privacy of personal information continues to be of utmost importance to Irish people with almost nine out of ten claiming it to be very important to them personally.

- Financial history achieves greatest levels of importance (almost 9 out of ten – very important). However medical records, credit card details and PPS number is mentioned by 8 of 10 respondents. Interestingly this year, PPS number has grown in importance in terms of keeping private compared to previous years (84 % very important in 2005 vs.60% in 2002).

- There is concern amongst Irish people about using the Internet in terms of disclosing credit card details and the possibility of Internet fraud. Similarly there are low levels of trust in using companies on the Internet, even well known companies.
1. Privacy of Personal Information in Context

Crime prevention and privacy of personal information continues to achieve the highest levels of importance with nine out of 10 people saying that these issues are very important to them personally. Please see chart below for comparable 2002 data. Each of these issues has increased in importance to people compared to 3 years ago suggesting that the privacy issues overall are increasingly more of a concern to people in 2005.

Demographically, privacy of personal information is of more importance to professional / white collar workers (93% ABC1; 85% C2DE). Similarly to 2002 results, younger people attach less importance than those aged 25-49 year (18-24 yr olds 85%; 25-49 89%). There were no differences by gender.

While some demographic groups may attribute slightly lower levels of importance to privacy issues then others, overall the levels of importance are very high which suggests it is a matter of significant importance to people.
2. Importance of privacy for Various Types of Personal Information

Financial history, medical records, PPS number and credit card details attach highest levels of importance in keeping private, with over 8 of 10 people attributing “very important” to these issues. All of these issues have increased in importance since 2002, particularly PPS number which is now achieving similar levels of “very important” as credit card details and medical records.

Of the other types of information personal telephone number is deemed as very important to keep private by six out of ten people compared to just over one in two people for home address and date of birth. Marital status achieves lowest levels of importance.
When analysed by demographics, young people (18-24 year olds) continue to attach less importance to privacy issues than older people (50-64 year olds) particularly for those issues at the lower end of importance scale for e.g. personal telephone number etc. Older people attribute least importance to keeping credit card details private (72% very important). Women continue to attribute more importance to medical records, home address and date of birth than men.
3. Privacy issues using the Internet

A new question was introduced in 2005 about privacy issues when using the Internet. These questions reflect high levels of don’t know, suggesting that for a proportion of people using the internet is still something that they do not have a strong opinion about, probably due to not using the internet to buy goods etc. Levels of don’t know are highest amongst older people (50-64 years 46% don’t know) and blue collar workers (C2DE’s 37%).

Overall just under one in two people worry about disclosing their credit card details in the Internet, and two in four people agree to some extent that Internet fraud is a cause of concern for them. There is little agreement for trusting companies on the Internet to act in a fair and honest manner (23% agreement) or feel comfortable about disclosing credit card details even to well known companies (21% agreement).

(Q.3) The following are statements about what people have said about privacy issues when using the Internet. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement?
Demographically, white collar workers are more concerned about disclosing credit card details and Internet fraud, but have also greater trust in companies on the Internet perhaps reflecting greater familiarity of using the internet to access goods and services than more blue collar workers (C2DE’s). A similar pattern also exists for men (see chart above for actual percentages).
4. **Direct Marketing**

People continue to be opposed to receiving unsolicited direct marketing regardless of which medium is used. Telephone continues to achieve highest levels of opposition (52% not happy at all) followed by The Post and SMS / Text messages. SMS and email is achieving higher levels of don’t know than other media reflecting lack of relevance of these types of media to key groups of people.

![Attitude Towards Unsolicited Mail...](chart)

Higher opposition towards all types of direct marketing amongst more white collar workers, particularly email (50% ABC1; 38 % C2DE). Younger people are showing greater dissatisfaction at being solicited by text than other age groups (18-24 41%). With the exception of text messages, people who fall into 25-49 year old age bracket displaying highest levels of dissatisfaction at being solicited by direct marketing than younger or older age groups.
5. **Awareness of the Data Protection Commissioner**

Respondents were asked, where they would go if they wished to make a complaint about invasion of their privacy in terms of personal information. Encouragingly, 2005 results show a significant increase in spontaneous mention of Data Protection Commissioner’s office from previous years.

As awareness of Data Protection Commissioners Office has increased, other sources have declined particularly Gardai, Ombudsman Office, Lawyer / Solicitor.

Looking at this increase by demographics, there is higher awareness of the Commissioner’s office amongst white collar workers (ABC1’s 24 %), and amongst 35-49 year olds (20%) compared to younger people (18-24 olds 15%) and older people (50-64 year olds 16%).

As the proportion of people mentioning sources other than the Data Protection Commissioner’s declines, views are becoming more polarised, and the level of don’t know is increasing. Therefore as knowledge increases, people are aware that they do not go to the Gardai about privacy issues, but the Data Protection Commissioner’s office does not come immediately to mind. As seen on other measures, these people tend to be young (18-24 year olds 46% don’t know) and lowel social economic groups (C2DE’s 44% don’t know vs ABC1’s 33% don’t know).
6. Prompted Awareness of Data Protection Commissioner

Encouragingly in line with increased awareness of whom to contact to make a complaint about invasion of privacy, prompted awareness of the Data Protection Commissioner continues to increase. In 2005, one in two people are aware of the Data Protection Commissioner compared with just under two in five in 2002 and one in four in 1997.

As seen on other measures, 25-49 year olds and white collar workers (ABC1’s 67%) are more aware of Data Protection Commissioner than younger people (18-24 year olds 32%) and blue collar workers (C2DE’s 39%). As these latter demographic groups are consistently displaying lower levels of awareness about data protection across all measures- specific attention could be focussed on these groups to raise overall awareness.
7. **Advertising Recall on Buses, Trains or Posters**

Recent advertising for the Data Protection Commissioner on buses, trains and posters was recognised by one in four people. Awareness was higher amongst men and those in the 25-49 year old year bracket. It is significantly higher amongst white collar professional people (ABC1’s 33% vs. 19% C2DE’s) reflecting raised awareness in general about data privacy and protection amongst this group. Levels of awareness were low in Munster perhaps reflecting media distribution of campaign. Just under one in two (44%) who are aware the Data Protection Commissioner had seen the advertising. Surprisingly for advertising, recognition of the campaign was lowest amongst 18-24 year olds (16%). This group usually displays highest levels of awareness of advertising. Low results amongst younger people and blue collar workers suggests lack of relevance of data protection and privacy to this group.

![Graph showing awareness and campaign recall by various categories](image-url)

(Q.6-7)