



Rights News

Autumn 2008

SPECIAL ISSUE

Electric Picnic 2008

Stradbally Estate, Co Laois, Ireland

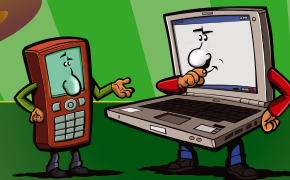


Irish Council for
Civil Liberties

GOT PROTECTION? PRIVACY IS OUR GIG

 Irish Council for
Civil Liberties
www.iccl.ie

Private Lives?



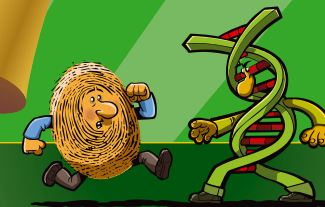
Your calls and personal data

- Your call and text records can be kept for three years and, if the Government gets its way, your e-mails and internet records will be kept for the same time.
- If the Government or a private company loses your personal data, it is under no legal obligation to tell you.... or the Data Protection Commissioner.



Who's watching you?

- CCTV cameras are an increasingly intrusive presence in our lives.
- There is no lawful basis for most forms of secret surveillance.
- If your privacy is breached, very few effective remedies are available.



Your biometric identity

- The Government is backing a proposed DNA database that will indefinitely retain samples from innocent people.
- If you visit America, your fingerprints and other biometric data may be retained indefinitely by the US authorities, without any guarantees about how this information about your biometric identity will be stored or shared.

The ICCL is working

For stronger privacy laws

For more effective safeguards to protect your private data

To empower people to protect their own privacy



On 29-31 August 2008 the ICCL travelled to the Electric Picnic in Stradbally, Co. Laois to raise awareness about privacy in Ireland. Over 3000 festival-goers supported and signed an open letter to Dermot Ahern, TD calling for stronger privacy laws and safeguards in Ireland.

Delivering the Privacy Message



Eimear Hanratty, Karen Ciesielski and Joanne Garvey delivering the Open Letter to the Department of Justice

Electric Picnic Open Letter Delivered to Department of Justice

On Tuesday, 23 September 2008, ICCL campaigners crossed Stephen's Green to deliver a giant copy of our Electric Picnic Open Letter directly to the Department of Justice. The Open Letter (right) was signed by thousands of festival-goers at the Electric Picnic musical festival in Co. Laois.

Full protection of privacy in Ireland will, however, take much more than a simple stroll down Stephen's Green: it will be up to Minister Ahern and the Department of Justice to heed the voices of over 3000 signatories and act to introduce robust laws and strong safeguards protecting privacy.

Already, some of the major concerns outlined by the ICCL's Electric Picnic privacy campaign are being dealt with in the Department of Justice. On 2 October 2008, it was reported that Minister for Justice Dermot Ahern is considering implementing a key ICCL demand, the introduction of mandatory reporting to the Data Protection Commissioner in cases where personal data goes missing on lost or stolen laptop computers and other devices. The new legislation would apply to Government departments, State agencies as well as banks and other entities.

The ICCL is continuing its work in the area of privacy into the autumn months through a full audit of privacy rights in Ireland, which should be published by the end of the year.



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Dear Minister,

From 29-31 August 2008 over 3,100 festival-goers at the Electric Picnic in Stradbally, Co. Laois signed this open letter to you.

The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) takes its data protection responsibilities seriously, and has chosen not to publicly release their names. We trust, however, that you will heed their call, and bring forward comprehensive privacy-protection legislation at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

ICCL



Irish Council for
Civil Liberties

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23 September 2008

Dear Minister,

We, the undersigned, believe that the time has come for the Government to take firmer action to protect our right to privacy.

- At the moment, our telephone calls and text records can be kept for up to three years, and the Government plans to retain our e-mail and internet records for just as long;
- When Government departments or private companies lose our personal data, they don't have to tell us, or the Data Protection Commissioner, and we may learn about it for the first time in the media;
- There is no lawful basis for most forms of secret surveillance and there are very few effective remedies if our privacy is breached;
- New plans for a DNA database would mean that biometric samples could be taken from legally innocent people, and kept forever.

Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights obliges the State to respect our right to private and family life, and the privacy of our homes and communications. We believe that firmer action is needed to make this right fully effective in practice.

In response to the privacy threats identified in this letter, we, the undersigned, call upon you to bring forward legislation to protect our right to privacy in a comprehensive way. This should include:

- A legal obligation to disclose the loss of sensitive personal data to the Data Protection Commissioner;
- A proper lawful basis for the use of secret surveillance;
- Safeguards to ensure that personal information about us can only be gathered, stored and consulted in ways that respect our right to privacy.

Signed,

3100 concerned festival-goers



Staff news:

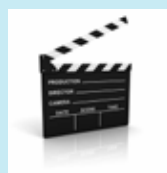


The ICCL would like to welcome Suzanne Handley, the ICCL's new Office Manager. Suzanne

brings years of experience in the corporate sector to the ICCL, where she will play a central role in ensuring the smooth running of all operational aspects of the ICCL's work.

Upcoming event: ICCL Human Rights Film School

As part of the ICCL's celebrations marking the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties will launch its Human Rights Film School on 10 December 2008 at the Irish Film Institute. Film students, filmmakers and those engaged in human rights will be invited to make an original short film focusing on a particular human rights-related issue in Ireland.



Five films will be shortlisted, and screened at an awards evening at the Irish Film Institute (IFI) in early summer 2009. A panel of high-profile judges, including human rights and film experts, will choose the overall winner of the ICCL Human Rights Film School. The winning filmmaker will secure a place in the European Inter-University Centre for Human

Rights and Democratisation's Summer School in Venice. This includes master classes and lectures given by renowned experts in the disciplines of film and human rights, entrance to the Venice International Film Festival and the opportunity to meet with producers and directors, a truly amazing and unique experience for any film student or filmmaker.

Full details of the competition and the launch will be made available soon. Please contact info@iccl.ie