



YOUTH PRIVACY

*“Your  
information  
- but is it  
really yours?”*

[www.privacy.org.nz](http://www.privacy.org.nz)

# DO YOU KNOW YOUR PRIVACY RIGHTS?

You can have a lot of control over what happens to your information.

Did you know:

- that you can ask to see the information that people like businesses, government agencies, clubs, or your doctor have about you? And if it's wrong, you can ask them to correct it?
- that organisations collecting information about you must have a good reason to collect it? They also have to tell you why they want it and what they're going to do with it (eg if they're going to give it to anyone else);

- that you often have a choice about whether you give someone information about you? And even if you don't have a choice, you can ask them what's going to happen to it;
- that organisations have to keep your information safe, and try to make sure it's accurate before they use it.

Of course, you're not the only person with rights. Your friends, family, workmates, teachers – everyone - have the same rights. So think before you go using information about other people.

# COMPUTER SAFETY

Keep your antivirus software up to date, have a firewall, yeah, yeah...

Ok, you're sick of the message. But do you really want your computer to be hacked? Your accounts hijacked? Someone to get your information and pretend to be you? It happens every day – there's big money in linking you in to botnets, stealing your identity or siphoning money out of your accounts. So it's worth thinking about protecting yourself.

If you're on a social networking site but want to check out another website, close the social network browser tab first.

Otherwise it's easier for a hacker to get into your account and get your details (even if your settings are on 'friends only').

Don't tick the 'remember me' box if you're on a shared computer – sign in every time, so someone can't sign in for you.

Don't email details like your bank account numbers to anyone, even if you think they're a friend. Scammers can be very convincing.

Use different passwords for different accounts. If one gets compromised, your other stuff should still be safe.

# SOCIAL NETWORKING

Everyone's got a page on sites like Facebook, Twitter or Bebo, right? So what's the problem?

There isn't a problem – social networks are a great way to keep in touch with your friends. It's just that it's not only your *friends* that you're talking to...

Once you put your details up, they're there for good. So think about what you're prepared to share with the world.

For instance employers check social networks, especially to find out about job candidates. So do others. How does that funny story, or that photo make you look? What would your teacher think? Your mother??

It's safest not to put your home address, phone number or where you work on your page. Not everyone who reads your page may have good intentions.

Take control – use your privacy settings to control the information people can see about you. Learn how the privacy settings on your site work; they're all different. It's best to set the privacy level strictly to begin with. You can always change things once you're comfortable with how it's working.

Check with others before tagging photos with their names, linking their photos onto your page, or putting up other information about them. Otherwise you're risking their privacy too.

# HEALTH

If you're under 16, your parent or guardian usually has a right to see your health information. And it's good to be open with your family if you can.

But sometimes, you might be uncomfortable for your parent or guardian to see your information. Talk to your doctor, counsellor or other health adviser about what you want. They'll be able to help you find out what will work best for you. And you'll be helping them make decisions about whether they can talk to your family.

If you want to see what information your health advisers have about you, just ask. You'll often be able to see the lot – and discuss it with them if you have any questions.

# *SURVEILLANCE*

Security cameras are everywhere these days. They can play an important part in keeping people safe. You may not have much of a choice about being caught on camera – but you're not powerless either.

Look out for notices about why cameras are there, and who to contact if you need to see footage of yourself (for instance if you've been accused of a crime).

Organisations with cameras or scanning devices or other surveillance tools should have proper policies about how they're used.

Cameras in really private areas, such as in toilets or changing rooms are usually not allowed. Speak up if you're concerned.

# COMPETITIONS

Ever entered a competition where you can win a great prize just by answering some questions about yourself? You may just want the prize – you may not care who gets your details. Until you receive all those annoying messages from strangers, offering to sell you stuff you don't want, or chewing up your mobile phone balance...

Before handing your information over, check out the fine print. What's the company going to do with it? Are they going to sell it to someone else? They should always have a statement telling you what's going to happen. Then you can choose what you're prepared to tell them.

If they don't tell you what they're doing, be suspicious!

# *WHEN PEOPLE CAN ACCESS YOUR INFORMATION*

Parents and guardians often need to get information about you, particularly if you're under 16. Occasionally, though, there are reasons why they shouldn't. If you're unsure, ask for advice from someone you trust.

The law sometimes allows schools, government agencies and the Police to get information about you even if you don't agree. They have a job to do and they need information to do it.

You can still ask why they need the information about you though, and ask to see what they have. After all, you still have rights.

# EMPLOYMENT

It's difficult to argue with an employer if you're wanting a job. But you do have rights when it comes to what employers can ask about you, and what they can do with the information.

For instance employers usually need to know about criminal convictions. But there are some convictions that you may be able to keep private.

Check with people like us or Youth Law if you're not sure what employers can ask.

You don't have to disclose diversions.

It's best not to assume that your email or internet use at work is private. Ask your employer what their policy is, so you're clear what you can do.

# *GET INVOLVED!*

Your views matter. If you're not happy with what people are doing with your information, say so. At least tell someone you trust, or if it's serious then report it to the Privacy Commissioner.

Things only change when people speak up.

If an organisation's privacy policy is too long or too hard to read, tell them. Policies should be written so people can read them easily and make choices about what's happening with their information.

The best protector of your privacy is you. Make sure you know what's going on.

Not everyone agrees about privacy. Get involved in the debate. You're the ones who'll decide the shape of privacy in the future...

For more information about privacy,  
check out:

*[www.privacy.org.nz](http://www.privacy.org.nz)*

*email: [enquiries@privacy.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@privacy.org.nz)*

*freephone: 0800 803 909*

Get in touch and tell us what you  
need to know – we'll get some  
advice on our website for you.



Privacy Commissioner  
Te Mana Matapono Matatapu