



The Royal Academy
of Engineering



Academy Briefing

The Security of Personal Information

The Royal Academy of Engineering 29 Great Peter Street,
London, SW1P 3LW

Thursday 19th July 2007, 2.30 for 3pm

In March of this year The Royal Academy of Engineering published its report *Dilemmas of Privacy and Surveillance* to an overwhelming media response. The report discussed the increase in surveillance and data collection, the technologies that are making this possible, and the impact this will have on individuals' privacy and on trust within society. This briefing will explore one of the main themes of the report – the vulnerability of personal information in a culture where huge amounts of information are collected and change hands on a daily basis. It will look at the extent of data collection; technologies to secure electronic transactions; designing IT systems to protect privacy; and protecting the data of consumers.

Programme

Chair: Professor Nigel Gilbert FREng, chair of the *Dilemmas of Privacy and Surveillance* working group

2.30pm: Registration, tea and coffee

3pm: Welcome by the Chair

3.10pm: Dr Kirstie Ball: *Surveillance and personal data collection in contemporary Britain*

3.40pm: Dr Martyn Thomas: *Can personal information be held securely?*

4.10pm: Break

4.30pm: David Birch: *Connection and Disconnection: The Technology Roadmap*

5pm: Tom Illube: *Protecting Consumers' Privacy*

5.30pm: Panel Discussion

6pm: Drinks reception

7.30pm: Close

To register for this event, please contact Miss Sylvia Hearn on 020 7227 0519 or by email on sylvia.hearn@raeng.org.uk

For further information contact Dr Natasha McCarthy on 020 7227 0575 or natasha.mccarthy@raeng.org.uk

Dr Kirstie Ball is Senior Lecturer in Organization Studies at the Open University Business School. She is a founding director of the Surveillance Studies Network, founding co-editor of the journal *Surveillance and Society* and one of the authors of 'A Report on the Surveillance Society' published by the Information Commissioners Office in November 2006. Her research examines the theory, practice and consequences of surveillance in the workplace and society. Details of her research and publications can be found here:
<http://www7.open.ac.uk/oubs/research/staff-detail.asp?id=436>

Surveillance and personal data collection in contemporary Britain

The UK is widely regarded as the exemplar of the surveillance society. Its origins lie in the pursuit of bureaucratic efficiency, military strategy, crime control and social welfare. As surveillance practices pervade everyday life, an exploration of the experience, effects and consequences of surveillance on individuals is needed if effective regulation, policy and practices are to be developed. This seminar describes a week in the life of a fictitious family in 2006, and again in 2016, to illuminate the complexities, dilemmas and difficulties of life in the surveillance society.

Martyn Thomas specialises in the procurement, acquisition and assessment of large software intensive systems, software engineering, and engineering management. He acts as an expert witness where complex software engineering issues are involved, and is visiting professor in software engineering at the University of Oxford, a visiting professor at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth and at the University of Bristol, and a member of the executive committee of the UK Computing Research Committee, UKCRC. He was awarded a CBE for services to software engineering in 2007.

Martyn Thomas was a member of the *Dilemmas of Privacy and Surveillance* working group.

Can personal information be held securely? Computer databases of personal information face conflicting requirements. For example, legitimate users must find the data easy to access, but the system should be secure against unauthorised use. Reports of security failures are commonplace in the technical press: a recent report described the loss of personal data relating to 100,000 employees of the US Transportation Security Administration. This seminar describes some of the difficulties in keeping personal information secure, and suggests what could be done immediately and in the longer term.

David G.W. Birch is a Director of Consult Hyperion, which he helped to found in 1986. Prior to this he spent several years working as a consultant in Europe, the Far East and North America. He graduated from the University of Southampton with a B.Sc (Hons.) in Physics. Described by The Independent newspaper in 2004 as a 'grade-A geek', and by the Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation in 2005 as 'one of the most user-friendly of the UK's uber-techies', Dave is a member of the advisory board for European Business Review and UK correspondent to the Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce. He is well-known for his more than 100 "Second Sight" columns in The Guardian's Online supplement.

David Birch was a member of the *Dilemmas of Privacy and Surveillance* working group

Connection and Disconnection: The Technology Roadmap

Connection is easy, but disconnection is difficult, just as doors are simple and locks are complicated. It is far easier to create networks for sharing information than it is to lock people out of a private network. This talk looks at the dynamics inherent in the technology roadmap presented in the report *Dilemmas of Privacy and Surveillance*, and shows how an understanding of technology opens up the potential for more optimistic visions of the future.

Tom Ilube is Chief Executive Officer of Garlik, the online identity experts (www.garlik.com). Garlik is a new consumer company created by the founders of Egg plc and backed by venture firms 3i and Doughty Hanson helping individuals protect their identity and privacy in the digital world. Garlik has signed up over 55,000 customers to its first service, Data Patrol.

Protecting Consumers' Privacy Tom will talk about consumers' attitude to privacy, based on extensive face to face and quantitative consumer research. Whilst a majority of consumers say they are concerned about privacy, a surprisingly small number actually do anything to protect their privacy. Tom's talk will provide some insights into what is really going on when it comes to personal identity and privacy in the digital world.