



Privacy & Data Protection

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- Banks warned to get their house in order, p.18
- Housing sector should 'wake up' to data protection, p.20
- Is the tide turning on social network sites?, p.20

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EU's challenge to industry: new standard for cookies by mid 2012

The European Commission has challenged organisations to come up with a uniform way of not tracking users' online behaviour by June 2012.

EU Commissioner, Neelie Kroes, said that "the standard must be rich enough for users to know exactly what companies do with their information and for me to be able to say to industry: if you implement this, then I can assume you comply with your obligations under the Privacy and Electronic Communications Directive."

Ms Kroes said that if she does not see a speedy and satisfactory development,

she "will not hesitate to employ all available means to ensure citizens' right to privacy."

The deadline for EU Member States to implement the new cookie rules brought in by the revised E-Privacy Directive (2009/136/EC) in their national laws was 25th May 2011, but very few Member States met the deadline.

Almost one month after the deadline, discussions remain ongoing in most national parliaments. Those countries that have implemented the legislation have used varying methods,

suggesting that that there will be variations among national outcomes rather than an EU-wide approach. The UK is one of the countries to have adopted the new rules, as have Sweden and Ireland.

Since the new rules came into force, the UK regulator has written to several website operators warning them to take steps to comply with the new cookie rules (the websites operators had been the subject of complaints from internet users).

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All UK firms to face breach reporting

Vice President of the European Commission, Viviane Reding, has warned a group of British bankers that they, along with other UK organisations, will be joining telecoms firms and internet service providers in being forced to report security breaches. New legislation measures, expected to arrive in the Autumn, are going to be "very solid on rules" said Ms Reding.

Speaking at the British Bankers' Association

conference, Ms Reding said that mandatory breach notification will ensure that organisations take data protection seriously.

"I intend to introduce a mandatory requirement to notify data security breaches — the same as I did for telecoms and internet access when I was telecoms commissioner, but this time for all sectors, including banking and financial services," she said.

"It would create a stronger incentive for business to conduct serious risk assessments to protect personal data and to implement the appropriate security measures protecting the confidentiality, the integrity and the availability of personal data."

Reding explained that the Commission's proposals to change data protection legislation would be revealed in

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