

Web Privacy

In cyberspace no formal law exists, so users can only rely on the laws of their individual countries. Fortunately for US users there have been many laws established to protect people's privacy, even online. While the US constitution does not contain the word privacy, congress has determined that privacy is protected by a number of the Amendments. Because of this it is a penumbra right and therefore protected by The Bill of Rights. (Walton)

Personal information is extremely valuable and useful to marketers. It allows them to contact specific people who they feel are most likely to want their products. "You may be surprised to learn that there is no U.S. Law which forbids this type of information gathering. Short of medical and financial records, there is no law which prevents what a company may do with this information either."(Moré)

Most people feel that when they are surfing the net they are safe and anonymous, this however is not true. "When you are surfing the web you may think you are anonymous, but there are various ways that information about you or your activities can be collected without your knowledge or consent:

- Cookies
- HTTP
- Browsers
- There may already be information about you published on the web
- Downloading freeware or shareware
- Search engines
- Electronic commerce
- E-mail
- E-mail and cryptography
- Spam
- Dangers of Internet Relay Chat"(Copyright Officer)

There are organizations which are designed to help protect users. The best way to protect your private information is to be informed. One organization which helps with this is the Federal Trade Commission. "The Federal Trade Commission is educating consumers and businesses about the importance of personal information privacy, including the security of personal information. Under the FTC Act, the Commission guards against unfairness and deception by enforcing companies' privacy promises about how they collect, use and secure consumers' personal information. Under the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, the Commission has implemented rules concerning financial privacy notices and the administrative, technical and physical safeguarding of personal information, and it aggressively enforces against pretexting. The Commission also protects consumer privacy under the Fair Credit Reporting Act and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act." (Copyright Officer)

One Professor suggested that people Google themselves so they could get an idea of how much information is already on the web about them. "At the Borders book signing, Solove explained that much more information is available online than ever before and is accessible to anyone." (Kasiarz) It is

important to be aware of what you are putting on the internet. Don't put anything up you don't want people to know.

Citations

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