

Press Release

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Consumers need to know what the trade-offs are before they hand over personal data online

Speaking today at the Westminster Media Forum (WMF) debate on regulating online privacy, Communications Consumer Panel member Bob Warner will tell delegates that the majority of consumers are concerned about online privacy, and that they need to know what benefits they are trading their personal information for.

Bob Warner will say: “Our timely new research project looking at how online personal data is collected and used is uncovering worrying findings. It reveals that the majority of consumers are concerned about online privacy. But, while many say that controlling their data is their responsibility, they have low awareness of how their data is collected.

“The key gap seems to be in consumers’ understanding of what their personal data is used for. Without this knowledge they can’t make informed choices between on the one hand, withholding their data and protecting their privacy, and on the other hand, sharing their data and receiving benefits. So, how can consumers make an informed decision about whether to allow their data to be collected or not? Companies must explain to consumers the benefits that can result from sharing data such as more personalised services and lower prices. They must also tell consumers in a simple, straightforward way what data they collect, who they share it with, how long they hold it for and how they prevent it being misused,” Bob Warner will point out.

Ends

CONTACTS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Communications Consumer Panel was established to advise Ofcom on the consumer interest in the markets it regulates. The Panel is independent and sets its own agenda. Visit www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk for more information.

The Panel’s members appointed by Ofcom are:

- Anna Bradley (Chair)
- Fiona Ballantyne (member for Scotland)
- Colin Browne
- Roger Darlington (member for England)
- Maureen Edmondson (member for Northern Ireland)
- Bob Warner