# Worksheet 6 Communications and privacy

# Case studies

# 1. GCHQ

**“The intelligence and security committee maintains secrecy for a good reason” – by Malcolm Rifkind - The Guardian – 22nd May 2014**

Look up the full article at[**http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/sep/20/edward-snowden-uk-spy-watchdog**](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/sep/20/edward-snowden-uk-spy-watchdog)

In 2013, whistleblower Edward Snowden leaked thousands of secret documents revealing that GCHQ and the NSA (American National Security Agency) were collecting literally millions of records every day about phone calls made to, from or within the US.

He said *“I don’t want to live in a world where everything that I say, everything I do, everyone I talk to, every expression of creativity or love or friendship is recorded…”*

Research the Snowden case and discuss the following questions:

* Is freedom of information at all costs realistic?
* How much privacy / spying on British citizens would you accept as justifiable giving international terrorist threats?
* Do you accept the ISC’s plans to hold public sessions as a fair way for the public to gain confidence into the workings of the intelligence agencies?
* Where do you feel the line should be drawn?
* Is it in fact legal to collect this information?

**Challenges faced by legislators**

In 2014, Rights groups have brought a case against GCHQ claiming that mass surveillance of the Internet by intelligence agencies violated human rights. See

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/dec/05/uk-mass-surveillance-laws-human-rights-tribunal-gchq>

* What are the challenges facing legislators who want to change the law to allow the governemt to continue its hacking activities?
* What are the challenges facing those who oppose changes to the law?
* What are the risks and benefits of changes to privacy laws?

See <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2015-05/18/gchq-hacking-legal-secret-change-in-law>

# 2. Google breaking data protection laws

**“Google changes UK privacy policy, but avoids hefty fine” – by James Tempterton – Wired.co.uk – 30th January 2015**

**Look up the article at**

[**http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2015-01/30/google-ico-privacy-policy**](http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2015-01/30/google-ico-privacy-policy)

Suggested questions or points of discussion:

* What is the role of the “Information Commissioner’s Office” (ICO)?
* What were the ICO’s main concerns regarding Google?
* Why did the ICO and many other European counties feel Google was violating national privacy laws?
* What is your opinion on the European rulings?

# 3. Google’s Street View

Privacy advocates have objected to the Google Street View feature. Why? Look up

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Street_View_privacy_concerns>

Imagine the following hypothetical scenario:

*“Google is starting to turn its attention to mapping ever increasingly remote locations, and would now like to bring its street view technology to a remote African village.”*

* Explain and defend how, as a Google project manager, you would evaluate a proposal to bring Google’s street view technology to a remote African village.
* What questions should be asked?
* Who should be consulted?
* What benefits, risks and safeguards should be considered?

# 4. Apple: recording your moves

If you have an iPhone or 3G iPad, a hidden file is regularly recording the position of these devices.

Anyone with access to the file can find out where you’ve been over the last year. See:

<http://radar.oreilly.com/2011/04/apple-location-tracking.html>

* What concerns might someone have about this?
* Is it an invasion of privacy?
* Is it legal?

# 5. Facebook

“Facebook privacy challenge attracts 25,000 users” BBC News – 6th August 2014 .

See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-28677667>

* What are the allegations against Facebook?
* What did Mr Schrems discover in about data that Facebook held on him 2011?
* Would you care if Facebook held data about you? Would anyone care?
* Do you consider this an issue on which there should be legislation?

# 6. Facebook/Google merger

# Facebook now has in excess of 1.35 billion active users, of which 600 million are active mobile users and between them over 140 billion friend connections have been made.

Google has over 250 million Google+ users, over 500 million active Gmail accounts and sees over 100 billion searches carried out per month from its search engine. On top of this Googles’ YouTube facilities have over 1 billion active users.

If Facebook and Google merged into one company you could potentially end up with a single organisation managing almost all aspects of how you interact with online content.

Look up the implications of such a merger – e.g.

<http://www.quora.com/Would-a-merger-between-Facebook-and-Google-violate-anti-trust-laws>

* What is the problem with very large companies merging?
* What implications could such a merger have on individuals?
* Are there laws to stop big companies merging?
* Is it likely that Facebook and Google would be allowed to merge?