

Summary:

Pinning our faith on Big Brother ... together with all the little brothers?

The report, commissioned by the Ministry of Modernisation and the Data Inspectorate, presents the results of a representative survey on the population's attitude towards and knowledge of the protection of personal privacy. Moreover, the survey reveals how the population behave in different situations and activities where personal data about them has been collected and further processed. In total 1000 persons were interviewed within May 2005.

The survey reveals that:

- The population has a lot of trust in how different public bodies and private companies process personal data. In particular, public bodies enjoy great trust from the population, with the police being in a special position. Banks also enjoy a lot of trust. Companies which collect toll money are the kind of organization which most people say they have no trust in. Over one-half say that they are very slightly or slightly worried that personal data can be misused in different situations and in connection with different actions they were asked about. The exception is use of the Internet, where 61 percent say that they are very or rather worried about misuse of personal data.
- Quite many say that they know about different rights, such as for example the right to have access to data about oneself and to have wrong data corrected or erased. The right to object that personal data is used for direct marketing is the most known right. The duty that the controller has to inform about who is collecting information and what it shall be used for, is the least known.
- Over 80 percent have not availed themselves of the right to access what personal data that is held on them by different public and private bodies. 70 percent of these say that the most important reason for them not to use the right of access is either that they have not reflected over the fact that there is personal data held on them or that they do not bother what personal data is held on them.
- 44 percent do not know that there is an independent authority responsible for the protection of personal data. 33 percent know that there is such an authority, and that this is the Data Inspectorate.
- The personal number is the item of personal data that most believe is important to be protected by legislation from collection and further use. A majority hold that it is totally unnecessary or little important to protect many of the personal data that the Personal Data Act defines as sensitive data. This concerns trade union membership, political opinions and religious beliefs.

There are many who hold that it is more important to protect one's mobile telephone number rather than to protect such data.

- There is a lot of confidence that personal privacy is well protected by laws, rules and the Data Inspectorate and that private and public bodies observe data protection legislation. Almost 60 percent say that personal privacy is so well protected in Norway that one can safely disclose personal data.
- Those who do *not* believe that personal privacy is so well protected that one can safely disclose personal data, do not request access to what data is found on them more often than others. A large part of these also say that they have not reflected over what kind of personal data exists on them or that they do not trouble themselves with what personal data there is.
- 14 percent have disclosed personal data in exchange for free samples or a good offer. In the youngest age group, the figure is 27 percent.
- Over half of the group wholly or partly disagrees that health personnel may exchange health data without consent from the patient. 82 percent wholly or partly agree that the police should be able to watch over the Internet, also if the surveillance includes themselves. 72 percent wholly or partly disagree that automatic traffic surveillance breaches personal privacy.
- Camera surveillance has strong support even though 80 percent feel safe in the areas where they move about daily, and half of them hold that the camera merely contributes to moving acts of violence and vandalism elsewhere. Camera surveillance creates a larger sense of safety in those who already feel safe than in those who do not feel safe in the areas where they move about daily.
- Almost each and all hold that it is positive to have cameras in premises where there are bank and postal services. Over 80 percent hold that it is good to have a camera inside a bus and a train and in shops, and almost 80 percent hold the same with regards to taxis. Even among those who say that they *do not like* the fact that more and more places have camera surveillance, there is a large number who hold that it is fine to have cameras in busses, trains and taxis, in premises where there are bank and postal services and in shops.
- 67 percent say that they are generally careful with leaving behind personal data on the Internet. Nevertheless a majority say that they seldom interrupt a logging onto the Internet even if they are requested for personal data that they *do not* wish to disclose. Consequently many give their consent to the collection and processing of personal data even if they do not wish it.

These results show that the population has strong trust that privacy is protected in a good way, and that it is not particularly worried that personal data can be misused. A large part of these people does not reflect at all over the fact that personal data on them is collected or they do not bother themselves with that. This also applies to those who say that they do not trust that personal privacy is so well protected that one can safely disclose personal data. And many of us disclose data that we actually do not wish to disclose. This gives reason to ask how well we guard our own personal privacy. There is also good reason to ask how good a protection of personal privacy it is that consent to processing of personal data is a central condition for processing. If one wishes to strengthen the

position of personal privacy in society, it is problematic to leave more of this responsibility to the individual.