

Confidence in public sector data stewardship collapses

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There has been a sharp fall in the public's confidence in the ability of "most trusted" institutions such as doctors and the police to protect the security and confidentiality of personal data and details, according to a study by data protection company DQM.

Following a slew of high-profile data security breaches over the past two years, UK citizens are concerned about the ability of public sector organisations to handle their sensitive personal information. Least trusted were councils (23%), central government departments (19%) and social networking sites (15%).

According to DQM, twice as many people trust their credit card provider as they do government departments.

Despite the banking crisis, about half the UK population was satisfied about data security standards at their bank and building society, the study suggested. Two-fifths trusted travel companies and credit card issuers, and around a third were comfortable with hotels and insurance firms.

Public fears over the security of data have mounted following incidents such as the Home Office's loss of the personal information of prisoners, the theft of children's personal data from a local council, and, most recently, Scotland Yard officer Bob Quick's security blunder in unwittingly revealing secret counter-terrorism information.

While customers expect customisation and convenience from businesses – based on detailed personal informa-

tion – paranoia about the protection of personal details is soaring too.

Adrian Gregory, managing director of DQM, said: "These findings highlight the urgent need to improve standards of personal data security in the private and public sectors alike. Organisations need a means of benchmarking their current personal data security standards against an industry and best practice average.

"Unless widespread improvement in data security standards takes place in the next few years, across both sectors, then commercial organisations stand to lose business, and government departments and councils will miss efficiency targets, all because the public is increasingly less willing to risk handing over their personal details."

BRIEFS

The IWR website is updated daily with up-to-the-minute news from the information profession. Here are some of the stories that have featured on the site in the last couple of weeks.

■ **The Elsevier Foundation** has invited grant proposals for its two programmes this year: the Innovative Libraries in Developing Countries and the New Scholars programmes. Two proposals, due by August 2009, will be awarded grants in December of one, two and three-year sums between \$5,000 (£3,300) and \$50,000 (£33,500) every year.

→ <http://www.iwr.co.uk/2240509>

■ Independent academic publisher **Walter de Gruyter** has introduced the de Gruyter Open Library for its journals and book series, signifying a shift from both its traditional model and conventional open access model in publishing. The new hybrid offering for researchers is to meet the shifting interests of authors, customers and clients and to bring in a transparent model.

→ <http://www.iwr.co.uk/2240093>

■ In a move to align its management structure with **Bowker, Proquest** has appointed Annie Callanan its chief operating officer. She will be responsible for day-to-day operations for Proquest's publishing, marketing, customer care and content operations. Callanan, currently president and chief executive at Bowker, will continue to hold overall responsibility for Bowker, which provides search, analytical, promotional, and ordering services to publishers, booksellers and libraries.

→ <http://www.iwr.co.uk/2239705>

■ **A score of publishers** have signed up to UKSG's TRANSFER code of practice, which provides best practice guidelines and outlines responsibilities to ensure that journal content remains easily accessible in the event of a change of ownership.

→ <http://www.iwr.co.uk/2239078>

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MAKE-DO AND MEND



MRS SEW AND SEW RECALLED TO TWITTER FOR THE NATION

The Imperial War Museum London has recruited a World War II spokeswoman called Mrs Sew-and-Sew to front a social media campaign.

A war-time icon, Mrs Sew-and-Sew was recalled to blogging and twittering action to attract visitors to the museum over the Easter holidays.

Mrs Sew-and-Sew, a fictional character living in London in 1943, was hooked up to a "special typewriter" to share a host of money-saving tips from the war-time economy with the cash-strapped Londoners of 2009.

Based on the Ministry of Information propaganda character who encouraged people to make do and mend throughout the war, Mrs Sew-and-Sew spent Easter offering cooking and housekeeping tweets, blogging and showcasing film and photos from her era, which are being uploaded to YouTube and Flickr.

<http://www.twitter.com/mrssewandsew>
<http://sewx2.blogspot.com>

UK wastes billions in inefficient search

Searching for information on the internet costs the UK economy the equivalent of about £6.2bn in time, according to a study by enterprise search specialist Simplexo.

The research report added that the complexity of information in corporate IT systems and inefficient search capabilities meant that much of that time was wasted.

About 19% of the respondents said it took them between two and three

days to search for relevant information, and more than 24% said it took over a day.

More than a third of the respondents (34%) could not find all the data they wanted from systems such as CRM, email and accounting programs. Over 50% said they had to conduct detailed searches several times a day, and another 39% said they did so more than 10 times a week.

The study also revealed that 26%

still resorted to their IT desk for help in search, and 40% could undertake only one search at a time.

Simplexo chief executive Alistair Handyside said: "The cost of working with inadequate information is one of the most pressing threats to any competitive business."

He added that the solution was not necessarily a complicated business intelligence system, but a simple device that gave faster return on investment.

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