

The Data Protection Act (1984, 1998)



A lot of personal information about people is collected and then stored on databases.

Details about every single one of you will be held on a computer system somewhere.

Hospitals know about every trip you made to casualty when you fell off your bike. Banks know about how much pocket money you save each week (or not!),. Supermarkets know which magazines you read and who is your favourite pop group. Sky knows which programs you watch.

Many people are concerned about the amount of information and the use that the organisations make with this data.

A law was passed in 1984 and updated in 1998, called the Data Protection Act. This Act was introduced to protect the privacy of individuals and to ensure that personal information was collected, used and stored in an acceptable and suitable way.

Before organisations can store personal information about you, they must register with someone called the Data Protection Registrar. The organisation must pay a fee and complete some forms which show:

- their details e.g. company name and address
- details of the information they wish to collect and store about private individuals.
- the reason why they need to collect this data
- details of where and how they will collect the data
- details of how they plan to store the data
- details of whether they plan to sell the data to anyone else

Although most companies have to abide by the Data Protection Act, there are some exceptions, and some organisations are exempt from the rules above. These are:

- data that is related to national security for example spies or terrorists.
- data that is required by law to be made public
- information that you collect for personal purposes or about your family e.g. names and addresses in your birthday/address book
- any information which is being collected to help solve or prevent a crime
- data relating to income tax assessment and collection

Data Protection Act - Questions

1 When was the Data Protection Act (DPA) made law?.....

2. What was the purpose of introducing the DPA?

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3 What must an organisation do before it stores personal information?

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4. Name three pieces of information that the organisation must provide before it can begin to collect data.

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5 Write down the names of three organisations which you think may have information about you stored on a computer.

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6. Think of three organisations who do **not** have to comply with the Data Protection Act.

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- Print out enough copies to use during the lesson

You may not:

- Save this resource to a school network or VLE
- Adapt or build on this work

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