

FROM: NO CCTV (www.no-cctv.org.uk)
Press Release 3rd November 2009
Attn: News Desks



-- BEGINS --

NO CCTV AND PRIVACY INTERNATIONAL CALL ON INFORMATION COMMISSIONER TO HALT INTERNET EYES CCTV GAME

No CCTV has teamed up with Privacy International to launch a joint complaint[1] with the Information Commissioners Office regarding the Internet Eyes CCTV game[2]. Both organisations received a number of complaints from members of the public concerned about the privacy implications of the Internet Eyes system.

Internet Eyes, which is due to launch this month in the UK, is a CCTV system whereby internet viewers watch random live CCTV feeds from businesses subscribed to the service with the promise of cash rewards for viewers that spot the most crimes.

No CCTV and Privacy International believe that Internet Eyes violates the Data Protection Act and have called on the Information Commissioner to take immediate action to prevent the launch of the service.

The complaint points out that Internet Eyes Ltd have no way of knowing who is viewing their images and they have no way of controlling where such images are stored or distributed. The complaint states:

“What is to stop an internet viewer of the Internet Eyes system taking a screen grab or videoing images from a CCTV feed and then keeping those images permanently and distributing them as they see fit?”

Charles Farrier of No CCTV said:

“The Data Protection Act contains a number of exemptions relating to the handling of data for 'the administration of justice' but such exemptions require certain tests - which in the case of Internet Eyes are not met. Even if the tests had been met the exemptions should not be seen as a license to be reckless with personal data. Internet Eyes breaches at least five of the eight core principles contained in the Data Protection Act, it is incredible that the system has got as far as it has.”

The complaint concludes:

“The complaints that we have received in relation to Internet Eyes have expressed concerns about privacy in a far more wide reaching manner than the principles laid down in the Data Protection Act and we share the view of Desmond Browne QC, Chairman of the Bar Council, that in a country with a strong common law tradition it is the common law principles which govern protection of our privacy that we should all be working to uphold. In the meantime we hope that the Data Protection Act will hold as a first line of defence and prove strong enough to protect us from Internet Eyes and the very serious consequences of allowing this latest attempt to expand surveillance in Britain.”[3]

-- ENDS --

[See Page 2 for references and notes to editors]

References:

[1] The full complaint can be found at :

http://www.no-cctv.org.uk/materials/docs/ICO_complaint_internet_eyes.pdf

[2] See <http://www.interneteyes.co.uk/index.html>

[3] Details of Desmond Browne QC's speech are at <http://www.barcouncil.org.uk/news/press/759.html>

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. No CCTV is a UK group campaigning against the excessive use of surveillance cameras in the UK. Their homepage is at www.no-cctv.org.uk

2. For further information contact Charles Farrier on press@no-cctv.org.uk