

MEDIA RELEASE

Ask us about privacy

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There's now a new way to answer your privacy questions. The Office of the Privacy Commissioner today launched Ask Us, its new online knowledge base, to help you find out what you want to know about your privacy rights and obligations.

Ask Us, which can be found on the Office of the Privacy Commissioner website, allows people to access reliable privacy guidance at any time. It's similar to using a search engine, but this one is designed to answer questions you may have about information privacy and the Privacy Act.

Privacy Commissioner John Edwards says Ask Us gives people access to privacy advice at all times. "We have designed this tool with a 360 degree view of who might find it useful. It can assist anyone from individuals to small business operators to people working within government agencies who need privacy information in a timely way. We will also enhance the content on an ongoing basis.

"Last year, our office took over 8,000 enquiries from the public through our 0800 phone line and via email. We also received nearly 300 media enquiries on a wide range of topics including data breaches, the Harmful Digital Communications Act, drones, and public registers."

Ask Us includes answers to many of the Office's most frequently asked questions, including:

- What should I do if there has been a data breach?
- Can I record someone without telling them?
- What do I need to do if I am planning to install CCTV?
- Can I ask an organisation for information it might have about me?

You can use Ask Us to find out what you need to know so you can get on with what you need to do - whether that's installing CCTV, check out a job applicant or finding out what your credit report says.

The Office also wants you to help it make Ask Us better. If you don't get a useful answer, please use the built-in feedback function. This information enables the

Office to continue to review and refine the performance of Ask Us. If you or others come to it at a later date with the same or a similar question, it will hopefully give an answer that gets to the nub of your privacy issue.

The technology behind Ask Us is available for other government agencies to adopt and adapt for their own use. Developed and built by SilverStripe, the Ask Us knowledge base is powered by a combination of the SilverStripe content management system and the Solr search engine, and is hosted on the all-of-government Common Web Platform.

“We believe this is a leading model that is available to be shared with other public sector agencies that are also on the Common Web Platform. People will be able to access information that is relevant to them in a convenient way without having to join a phone queue to a call centre,” Mr Edwards said.

You can find Ask Us on the Office of the Privacy Commissioner’s website: www.privacy.org.nz.

For more information, contact Charles Mabbett on 021 509 735.