



Protecting your privacy...or not...(Part 2)

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By Dorothy Hagel

In the previous article about the privacy issues we discussed the obligation of banks, hospitals or other institutions to provide records containing private information to persons to whom the information belongs when request for information is made. For examples, the hospital must provide the patients with copies of their medical records if the patients make a request for these records. If request for personal information is made, then the information has to be provided within a prescribed period of time, generally 30 days of the date of the request. The disclosure cannot be delayed unless extenuating circumstances exist to warrant the delay.

The obligation of timely disclosure of personal information to authorized persons goes hand to hand with obligation to safeguard the information and destroy the records when the information is no longer needed for the purpose it was originally collected. This means that the companies are not allowed to sell your name and contact information to others unless you explicitly agree for them to do this.

This explicit consent to disclose your information is very important. If you do not want your personal information to travel around then make sure that you read small prints and see where you mouse is clicking when ordering products online because you may inadvertently agree to someone to collect and use your personal data. For example, you may be asked to complete a ticket for a draw of a prize, which you will be

happy to do, and unless you closely examine the ticket, you will never realize that by completing the form you actually consent to pass your personal information around.

Companies are obligated to have a policy that outlines their procedure for collection, use, preservation and distraction of personal information. Even Facebook has it. Next time you are on your account, check your privacy settings and decide whether you want to limit public access to some of your personal data.

It is also your right to withdraw your consent for disclosure of your personal information whether your consent was consciously given at the time you signed up for a mailing list or was given inadvertently. However, once something has been disseminated all over the internet, it is very difficult to remove it from there. Thus whenever you are posting something online take a breath and stop for a second to think if you are comfortable with the entire world seeing the material. Your potential employers will see it too.

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