

Securing data has been a focused topic in the US for some time with hefty monthly fines for those companies with unsecured data; most especially credit card and personal information.

It seems the UK is finally catching up and the penalties for companies who are not securing data, given the escalating occurrence of identity theft, is set to be imposed with a vengeance.

How long before securing data transmitted openly via LAN, WAN or the Internet also attracts the same penalties....

The following has been recently reported:

“Losing personal data risks fines and jail

Organisations that lose data face cash fines, tougher inspections and even jail, under new proposals from Jack Straw to strengthen the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) come into force.

Large companies that register as data collectors face a price hike to £1000 from a new tiered fee structure, rather than the £35 flat fee they pay today. This would give the ICO more money to enforce data protection legislation, even though some smaller firms might pay nothing. They follow the recent disclosure that there were over 300 major losses of personal data by business and government over the past 12 months.

The proposals will enable the ICO to:

- fine data controllers for deliberate or reckless loss of data
- raid central government departments and public authorities to check compliance with the Data Protection Act without always requiring prior consent
- say when organisations should notify the ICO of breaches of the data protection principles
- publish a statutory data sharing code of practice to provide practical guidance on sharing personal data.

Data controllers are already at risk of criminal charges. Where data controllers ignore an ICO enforcement notice, "They are committing a criminal offence and the ICO is able to take appropriate action to force compliance with legislation", the government said.

Straw said the secure storage and "careful sharing" of personal information has become paramount. "Strong regulation and clear guidance is essential if we are to ensure the effective protection of personal data," He said the proposed changes would strengthen the ICO's ability to enforce the Data Protection Act and improve the transparency and accountability of organisations dealing with personal information. "This is very important if we are to regain public confidence in the handling and sharing of personal information," he said."

If you have not already undertaken a data privacy audit, is it not the time to do so?

It is not that difficult or costly to secure data. At least explore the options and the tools that can protect your organization.

Details of encryption techniques and methodologies can be found on this SAS website. Call us to discuss how our solutions can assure data security on ++44 (0) 1525 229308