



The big debate

Security is more important than privacy

Is it right that the police could be allowed to see which websites and messaging services we use?

Should your information be visible?

What you need to know

- The Investigatory Powers Act – or “Snoopers’ Charter” – is a new law that was passed by Parliament in November.
- This new law means that web and phone companies must now store information about everyone’s internet activity, so that the police can look at it if necessary.
- The law is meant to help in the fight against terrorism but some people feel that it is an invasion of our privacy.



Parliament has just passed a new law called the Investigatory Powers Act. It has been nicknamed the “Snoopers’ Charter” by people who do not agree with it. The law means that phone and internet companies must store information on every one of their customers, revealing which websites and messaging services they have used in the past year. The police and Government security services can use this information to find out more about suspected terrorists and cyber-criminals (people who commit crimes online). In some cases, they will be able to read their messages. A 2015 YouGov poll showed that just over half of British people agreed with allowing the police and security services to see their communications, but around one third were against it. Some people worry that the law takes away our privacy and freedom, and more than 190,000 people have signed a petition calling for the law to be scrapped.

It is a sensible safety measure

Allowing the police and security organisations to follow the online activity of suspected terrorists and other criminals will help keep us safer. It means giving up some of our privacy but it is worth the sacrifice. Anyway, generally, the only information that can be seen is about which websites and messaging services we are using – not what our messages say. In any case, the charter has rules to make sure that only certain people are allowed to see the information and only for specific reasons, so it is unlikely that innocent people will be affected. Besides, if you have nothing to hide, there’s no reason to worry.

It is an invasion of our privacy

We all have a right to privacy and to send messages and surf the internet as we please. It is wrong for the Government and security services to monitor us; it gives them too much power. What’s more, storing all that data for everyone in the UK is risky – if cyber-criminals found a way to hack in, they could get a lot of valuable information about us all. The new law may not even help much in the fight against terrorism because terrorists can just use special, private online networks to hide what they are doing. The charter will cost millions of pounds to put into place, money that would be better spent on investigating terrorism in the real world.

SNOOPERS’ CHARTER
Snooping is when you pry into other people’s private business, and a charter is a formal, written document outlining the rights of a particular group of people.



3 reasons why the “Snoopers’ Charter” makes sense

- 1 The law gives the police and security services the power they need to track terrorists and cyber-criminals and prevent wrongdoing.
- 2 Only authorised people will be allowed to look at the information, so that the privacy of innocent people is protected.
- 3 Why does it matter that your internet activity can be seen if you are doing nothing wrong?



3 reasons why our privacy should be protected

- 1 No-one, not even the Government or the police, should have the right to track you – it is an invasion of your privacy.
- 2 Having that information stored about all of us will create a security risk because hackers may be able to access it.
- 3 Criminals use special private networks so why monitor the normal internet?

Last week’s poll



Last week our debate motion was: Snacks should be banned in cinemas. It caused an outcry: SOS, save our snacks!



GETTY IMAGES



What do you think?

Now you’ve read a bit more about it, tell us what you think by voting in our online poll at theweekjunior.co.uk/polls. Vote **FOR** if you agree that security is more important than privacy, or vote **AGAINST** if you think privacy matters more. We’ll publish the results next week.