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## **Press release**

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For immediate release

### **Survey shows 1 in 3 organisations had personal data stolen in last 12 months**

A new survey conducted by privacy experts, Privacy Laws & Business, has found that one in three companies employing privacy professionals (responsible for complying with the Data Protection Act) has had personal data stolen within the last 12 months. The findings are revealed within a week of Richard Thomas, the Information Commissioner, reminding chief executives of the vital importance of protecting staff and customers' personal information following an alarming number of security breaches reported to his Office in the past six months.

Other interesting findings from the survey show that:

- 84% of data protection professionals support giving the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) compulsory audit powers
- 75% would support a criminal penalty for a major breach of data security
- Two thirds had a plan for data breaches but only 12% were willing to offer compensation to individuals
- in half of cases of data loss, the loss was due to the theft of a laptop.

Stewart Dresner, Chief Executive of Privacy Laws & Business, said: "What is surprising is that so many respondents' own organisations may well be subject to these ICO audits and criminal penalties. It seems that respondents believe their

management needs the shock of being subject to an ICO audit and possible criminal penalties before they provide sufficient resources to do a proper job.”

The results are from 70 individuals working in data protection of whom 23% are employed in finance, 14% local / central government, and 11% in insurance. The survey was conducted between 22 November 2007 and 22 February 2008.

## **Ends**

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## **Notes to editors**

1. Privacy Laws & Business provides an independent international privacy laws information service. [Clients](#) include many of the world’s largest companies and specialist lawyers in almost 50 countries.

In the United Kingdom, the company provides services to help its private and public sector clients comply with both the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act. The company’s website is [www.privacylaws.com](http://www.privacylaws.com)

2. The ICO press release can be found at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)