

CHECKLIST: PRIVACY RIGHTS AND THE INTERNET

New technologies have revolutionized how we live and do business—but with added convenience, there are also new concerns. E-mail and the Internet allow an enormous number of people and businesses access to our personal information. Here's a set of checklists to help you know if your personal privacy is threatened—and whether your business is threatening the privacy of others!

Personal E-mail and Internet Privacy Audit

Yes/no

- ___ Do you give out your name and personal information to Internet users you don't know well? No matter how nice an Internet user seems, he or she may be a con artist.
- ___ Do you write personal e-mail at work that you wouldn't want your boss to see? Your employer can legally monitor your e-mail messages!
- ___ Do you know that your e-mail message goes through many, many transmission "hubs" before reaching its destination? Even though snooping on e-mail messages is a federal crime, many hackers do just that every day.
- ___ Do you use encryption software for your e-mails? Encryption software can help preserve your privacy from hackers.

Business Privacy Policy Audit

Yes/no

- ___ Do you have a written e-mail and Internet use policy that employees must sign and abide by? Having a careful policy can avoid getting your business in trouble when employees misuse office technology.
- ___ Do you monitor employee e-mail? Generally, you are legally entitled to do so. But watch out! There are privacy limits you can't cross here.
- ___ Does your Internet site have a privacy statement for users to read?

- ___ If so, do you abide by your privacy policy?
- ___ Do you share customer information gathered on the Internet or by e-mail with other companies or subsidiaries of your own company? If so, in some cases, it could be a legal problem for your business!
- ___ Do you use encryption software and other technologies to protect customer credit card or other personal information?
- ___ If so, do you keep it up-to-date so that hackers don't catch up with you?