



Investigatory Powers Bill

Key points

- Public authorities currently receive all the communications data disclosed by communications service providers in response to a specific request. The request filter is an additional safeguard in the Bill; it will work alongside other acquisition safeguards to prevent data from being provided to a public authority that is not directly relevant to the request.
- Public authorities will sometimes need to make complex queries. For example, they may need to ask multiple communications service providers for data to identify an unknown person who is suspected of having committed a crime at three different places at different times.
- Currently, public authorities might approach CSPs for location data to identify the mobile phones used in those three locations at the relevant times, in order to determine whether a particular phone (and a particular individual) is linked to the three offences. This means the public authority may acquire a significant amount of data relating to people who are not of interest.
- The request filter will mean that when a public authority makes such a request, they will only see the data they need to. Any irrelevant data will be deleted and not made available to the public authority. The filter acts as a safeguard to minimise collateral intrusion.

What are the safeguards?

- The request filter when used acts as an additional safeguard for communications data requests made by public authorities, to ensure that the data they acquire is limited only to that which is absolutely necessary.
- The operation of the filtering arrangements will be overseen by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner.
- The powers ensure that the filtering arrangements, maintained by the Government, will be subject to clear safeguards around its use.
- The filtering arrangements can only operate in response to a necessary and proportionate authorisation for the acquisition of communications data.
- The Joint Committee on the draft CD Bill said that “the request filter will speed up complex inquiries and minimise collateral intrusion. These are important benefits.”

A compound query?

