

The Secretary
House of Representatives
Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

PRIVACY AMENDMENTS

May I respectfully suggest that the Committee obtain expert evidence of the full potential use of `cookies' when considering amendments to law regarding privacy and electronic technology.

As a post graduate student in technology from the University of Melbourne and designer of the Australian Politics Citizen's Forum, and former Principal Analyst in the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, in charge of computer technology I can advise the Committee that they should proscribe the use of cookies.

Cookies are a device sent to a computer to reside and identify the machine, the user and any other information requirements that are encoded in this tiny application. The cookie returns to its owner when the machine is logged onto the net or alternatively waits until the user logs back into the originating site whereupon it downloads its payload.

It is the extent, and design of the payload that should be of concern. Not merely that some personal information may be stored in some other receptacle but that information can be extracted from the resident system.

Within all Microsoft software exists the capacity to send information to a designated source from the user's machine.

This is particularly so for sensitive systems such as your parliamentary computers systems. Every time one of your staff accesses the internet or a new piece of software is down loaded onto the system cookies are dispersed to be resident in the system.

They are programs and their capacity and capability is limited only to the technology and the ingenuity of the programmer that sent them there.

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