

Reference: 561497

Jerin John
Information Rights Adviser
Information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

1 August 2018

Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information where you asked about the software used by Ofcom's Media or Communications team.

This was received by Ofcom on 9 July and it has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act").

Ofcom has duties to understand public opinion about Communications services, to provide information to consumers and to be transparent. Like most public bodies, we work with journalists and elected representatives to help them – and their readers, viewers and constituents – to understand what we do, why we do it and how it affects people. We use monitoring services to help us ensure that information is understood.

In all our interactions with external media and other stakeholders, we take data protection very seriously and observe requirements in the General Data Protection Regulation.

Please see our responses to each of your questions below:

1. *The software used by the Media/Communications team to manage press enquiries, send press releases and maintain a press contacts database. Please specify the value and the expiry date of any contracts associated with the tools you use.*

We do not use any software to manage press enquiries, beyond Ofcom's standard email programme Microsoft Outlook. We use software called Campaign Monitor to send press releases to media who have signed up to receive them – and email updates about our publications to stakeholders who have requested them.

We are unable to provide the value of the contract associated with Campaign Monitor as this is exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) of the Act. This deals with the exemption of information that would prejudice the commercial interests of a person or company. In applying this exemption, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing the information. The attached annex to this letter sets out the exemption in full, as well as the factors considered when deciding where the public interest lay.

The contract expiry date is Q2 2019.

We do not maintain our own press contacts database. However, we subscribe to a third-party contacts database run by Gorkana. The value of this contract is withheld as it is exempt under section 43(2) of the Act, and the contract expires on Q3 2018.

2. *The software used by the Media/Communications team to monitor the media. Please specify the value and the expiry date of any contracts associated with the tools you use.*

We also use Gorkana to monitor press cuttings, and a service called TV Eyes to monitor broadcast stories about Ofcom. The value of these contracts is withheld as it is exempt under section 43(2) of the Act. Both contracts expire on Q3 2018.

3. *The software used by the Media/Communications team to manage and store interactions with stakeholders (e.g. the media, regulators, government agencies, the community, the public). Please specify the value and the expiry date of any contracts associated with the tools you use.*

We do not use any specialist software for managing interactions with stakeholders, beyond Microsoft Outlook for emails.

4. *The software used by the Public Affairs or any other relevant team to monitor the political environment and Parliament and log interactions with politicians, civil servants, lobbying bodies, trade unions, etc. Please specify the value and the expiry date of any contracts associated with the tools you use.*

We subscribe to Dods Parliamentary Communications to monitor political and Parliamentary developments of relevance to Ofcom and the sectors we regulate. Interactions with Parliamentarians are logged securely on the Dods platform, accessible only to Ofcom account holders. The value of this contract is withheld as it is exempt under section 43(2) and it expires on Q1 2021.

If you have any queries, then please contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Jerin John

If you are unhappy with the response or level of service you have received in relation to your request from Ofcom, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be treated as a formal complaint and will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will acknowledge the complaint and inform you of the date by which you might expect to be told the outcome.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for undertaking internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all

such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact:

Steve Gettings
The Secretary to the Corporation
Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Annex

Section 43(2) – where information, if disclosed, would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of a company	
Factors for disclosure	Factors for withholding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open policy making and public confidence in regulated activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific companies are identifiable and as such their ability to conduct their business activities would be diminished if this data were publicly available at this time. Therefore, commercial interest would be prejudiced.
Reasons why public interest favours withholding information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ofcom enjoys a positive relationship with its stakeholders, including communications software providers, and is entrusted with commercially sensitive data provided by those companies. The release of this information into the public domain would impair both this relationship and Ofcom's ability to regulate in a fair and proportionate manner.	