

## **Act on Data Protection in Electronic Communications Came into Force on 1 September in Finland**

The new *Act on Data Protection in Electronic Communications*, which came into force on 1 September 2004, aims to safeguard confidentiality and protection of privacy in electronic communications. Its main objectives consist of clarifying the rules of processing confidential identification and location data, and providing new means to prevent spam and viruses.

To summarize, the rights and obligations related to the processing of identification data are not limited to telecommunications providers, but they are extended to all enterprises and associations that process confidential data in their telecommunications networks. Regarding location data, nobody may be located without his or her prior consent, except in an emergency situation. Moreover, in order to extend Spam email interdiction, telecommunications operators, and corporate and association subscribers have the right, even without the recipient's consent, to prevent the reception of email and SMS messages and remove malicious programs from messages if communication services or the recipient's access to means of communication are endangered.

Among other measures, electronic direct marketing may be addressed to consumers only with prior consent. Also, users are entitled to access their location data, and telecommunications operators are obliged to provide content service providers with data necessary for billing purposes. In general, Internet pages must inform users of the use of cookies and, finally, the police have the right to access IP addresses and IMEI (international mobile equipment identifier) codes of mobile phones.

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