

Office Papertrails Expose Confidential Company Secrets, Finds Fellowes

Written by Australian Business

LONDON--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--More than half (65%) of UK workers secretly know what their colleagues earn reveals new research released today by makers of the world's toughest shredders, [Fellowes](#).

“Whilst we understand the consequences of failing to increase security online with accounts, paper-based information seems to be the forgotten threat, especially within the workplace.”

Two-fifths regularly discover colleagues' salary information (44%) and a further one in five (21%) know their boss' annual salary.

Payslips (40%) are the most common paper-based material left lying around the office, followed by staff contracts (22%) and bank statements (12%) belonging to the company or employees.

Almost a fifth (39%) of the UK workforce go out of their way to read juicy material on their contemporaries and one in 10 going as far as bin raiding to get sight of co-workers' personal information.

Worse still, some 15% get sight of confidential information referring to redundancy packages and business restructuring information left behind in meeting rooms (11%).

Senior management must consider the security of commercially sensitive information given that the workforce often reads copies of company plans and decisions left on the printer (27%), or photocopier or scanner (20%)

Worryingly, the survey also found 16% admit that they would be more concerned about a colleague knowing personal information about them than a fraudster taking and using their personal information.

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Yet it's the security of information offsite that could equally put the company, and individuals, at risk of identity fraud as employees accidentally leave confidential information somewhere they shouldn't.

Around a quarter of office workers (23%) leave behind confidential paper-based information belonging to the company on a train or bus, some 15% recall leaving behind confidential paper-based information in a pub and a further 12% in a café or restaurant.

Darryl Brunt, sales and marketing director for Fellowes, explains: "Whilst we understand the consequences of failing to increase security online with accounts, paper-based information seems to be the forgotten threat, especially within the workplace."

"Employees are becoming far too complacent with the security of personal information. It is vitally important not to leave copies of confidential files around the office

"More than half (52%) are failing to take basic precautions such as consistently shredding paper documents with private or personal information before discarding.

"Copies of confidential information and where paper based information isn't destroyed correctly can easily be used by others for identity fraud. And where confidential information left on view for the entire workforce to see could not only cause repercussions for the individual but for the business as well."

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Notes to Editors:

*The research was commissioned by office specialist Fellowes and conducted by One Poll in August 2013. For this report, qualitative research was carried out among 2000 employed UK adults.

About Fellowes

Fellowes, Inc. offers an extensive range of products to equip the workspace, including paper shredders (<http://www.fellowes.com/gb/en/Products/Pages/product-category.aspx?cat=SHREDDERS>), laminators (http://www.fellowes.com/gb/en/Products/Pages/product-category.aspx?cat=LAMINATING_MACHINES), binders, desktop accessories and record storage solutions.

Founded in 1917 by Harry Fellowes and headquartered in Itasca, Illinois, Fellowes, Inc. employs more than 1,200 people throughout the world and has operations in 15 countries. Visit <http://www.fellowes.com/> for more information.