



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2011-03181

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** Crimes Involving Facebook or Twitter

### Request and Answer:

#### Question

Could you please provide me, via email with details of crimes where Facebook or Twitter have been mentioned during the investigation for the years 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 to date.

Specifically, for each year I would like:

- the total number of crimes where they are mentioned
- and details of the type of offence where they have been mentioned, and numbers of each type

For guidance, I am looking to get the picture from forces nationally in a similar vein to the article at this link:<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/2011/08/26/welsh-police-forces-record-extremely-concerning-rise-in-crimes-involving-facebook-91466-29304593/>

#### Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

It is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate costs limit" under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450 (18 hours).

Information in relation to 2008 and 2009 was recorded on a different database to that which is currently used. To retrieve data for this period would require a manual trawl of 1,021,877 records. Allowing 10 minutes for each record, it is estimated the process would take approximately 170,313 hours, grossly exceeding the 18 hour limit.

In October 2009, PSNI implemented an 'electronic investigation log' allowing an electronic search of recorded incidents. ICS (Information & Communication Services) conducted a search via the crime recording system however the information in relation to **offence type** would again require a manual trawl of each incident and the process would again exceed the 18 hour limit.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a

Refusal Notice, and the request has therefore been closed.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit; however the nature and structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible.

Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

Although excess cost removes the PSNI's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, I have provided below the information which was retrieved before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of the request.

The total number of crimes where Twitter has been mentioned:

In 2010 - None

In 2011 - 12

The total number of crimes where Facebook has been mentioned:

In 2010 - 62

In 2011 - 930

If you have any queries regarding your request or this decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing [foi@psni.pnn.police.uk](mailto:foi@psni.pnn.police.uk).

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ [www.psnipolice.uk](http://www.psnipolice.uk)

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.