



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-01963

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Crimes Relating to Facebook and Twitter

Request and Answer:

Question 1

For each year from 2009 to present, I would like the following information:

The number of reports of crime have been made which in some way relate to the internet site:

- A. Facebook
- B. Twitter

Question 2

I would also like a breakdown of the nature of these crimes (ie were they complaints of harassment, assault, sexual offences, theft, burglary etc) and whether they resulted in convictions.

Question 3

Please also provide any documentation which shows detail about the cases, and how Facebook and Twitter were involved in these alleged crimes.

Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), 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).

There is no offence category which directly relates to Facebook or Twitter. Crimes can be identified which relate to harassment, assault, sexual offences, theft and burglary, however, each of these incidents which have been recorded within the period requested would require individual research in order to determine whether Facebook or Twitter were involved. The PSNI's Information Communication Services Branch have advised that this could take 15 minutes per incident. As an average of 1500 incidents are recorded per day this task would greatly exceed the cost threshold.

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.

I have also considered how your request may be refined in order that the cost of complying with it may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. Unfortunately the nature and structure of the requested information makes this impossible.

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.

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.psni.police.uk

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