



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2013-00003

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** Complaints In Relation To Facebook

### Request and Answer:

#### Question

I would like to submit an FOI request asking for the number of complaints the PSNI have received about Facebook from 2008-12. Included in this could I have a breakdown of the number of complaints received by month and if possible a short description of what the complaint related to e.g bullying, a death threat, a Facebook page etc.

If the time scale of 2008-12 is too long and will mean that this request will fall within the exemptions could you please consider a shorter timeframe that will allow the request to comply with the exemptions.

#### 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.

In an attempt to retrieve the information requested I contacted ICS (Information Communications Services). However for ICS to provide the information requested would involve manually trawling each incident record, created between 01 January 2008 and 31 December 2012 inclusive. During this period there were approximately 3,136,899 incidents created on the PSNI crime recording system. Each record would require to be manually opened and each incident checked as PSNI does not have a specific incident type of 'Facebook complaint'. This process is estimated to take an average of 30 minutes to trawl the associated documents and statements for each incident which in total would take an estimated 1,568,450 hours to complete, thus exceeding the FOI permitted timeframe of 18 hours.

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 :

ICS could provide the number of incidents where facebook or twitter were mentioned in the incident investigation logs, however the following caveats would apply:-

- The number would relate to reported incidents, rather than the number of individual crimes.
- If facebook/twitter is mentioned in an incident investigation log, this does not imply that a crime occurred.
- If facebook/twitter is mentioned in an incident investigation log, this does signify that facebook and/or twitter were used by PSNI officers as part of the incident investigation.

The ability to search investigation logs electronically was commenced on 14/10/2009, therefore ICS could only provide statistics from this date onwards.

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.

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.psnj.police.uk](http://www.psnj.police.uk)

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