

Who's looking over your shoulder?



With 54% of UK businesses now allowing flexible working¹, a growing need has emerged for robust policy on privacy to ensure client data is protected and kept confidential outside of the office.

ID fraud, data leaks and security breaches are becoming increasingly common in our growing digital society. With 1.5 million people working remotely across the UK each year² - often from cafes, bars, hotels and hot desking - privacy is becoming harder to monitor than ever before. Whether it is client, customer or business data, mobile workers must ensure sensitive information stays confidential when working on the go.

Anyone accessing private data outside of a protected office environment is at risk from prying eyes. 'Shoulder Surfing' as it has become known, is a growing form of identity theft when private information is viewed or even photographed over the shoulder of anyone using a screen.

Shoulder surfing is a bi-product of working outside the office, but becomes a serious risk when viewing confidential data on-screen. Whether it's a person on the next table taking a quick peek at your emails, or someone glancing over your client proposal on the train, data breaches come in all forms and can be extremely damaging to businesses. With the new

¹ <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/10/20/30-uk-office-workers-are-more-productive-when-work/>

² <http://www2.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2016/05/20/number-of-staff-working-from-home-passes-1-5-million.aspx>

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) coming into effect in 2018 there's never been a more important time to safeguard sensitive information.

Concerns over privacy were highlighted in a recent survey of 1,000 UK office workers conducted by office product specialist Fellowes, who commissioned the research to understand more about the country's working habits. Over 4 in 10 (44%) admitted they had viewed printed confidential documents at work and a third (30%) had read private emails and documents on their colleagues' screen.

Darryl Brunt, UK Sales and Marketing Director at Fellowes commented: *"Companies are increasingly encouraging remote-working, which is great for employee flexibility, but could be extremely costly when it comes to security breaches. Unless remote workers are properly educated and have the right equipment they could end up costing their employers millions in fines for failing to protect personal data."*

"Shoulder surfing is a growing concern because of the number of people now working in open plan and public areas. How many times have we all been on the train and we can easily see the screen of the person sat near us. By using the right equipment, such as blackout privacy filters, workers can stop prying eyes glancing at their private on-screen information such as login details, client information, bank details and other sensitive or confidential data".

How to protect private data on the move

Fellowes has put together some tips on how remote workers can protect their privacy whilst working on the go:

- 1) **Keep devices in sight at all times:** Never leave your laptop, tablet or mobile device unattended when working in coffee shops, restaurants or other public spaces. Make sure that all of your devices are password protected and locked when not in use.
- 2) **Protect your screen:** To keep data safe from shoulder surfing use a [blackout privacy filter](#) when working in public environments so only you can see your screen head on.
- 3) **Pick up your papers:** Remember to check for any documents you might have left behind after working in public places.
- 4) **Keep sensitive documents hidden:** Make sure any sensitive documents are kept in a folder or [storage box](#) to keep information secure.
- 5) **Always shred:** Anything you no longer need should be destroyed using a [paper shredder](#). Never throw away confidential information without shredding first.

Identity thieves will 'raid' rubbish bins to steal your private information. Remember, it's not secure until it's shredded.

Now more than ever is the time for remote workers and businesses to assess the way they work outside of the office. With the benefit of being able to work anywhere comes an increased risk of shoulder surfing and data theft which must be addressed to ensure sensitive information is always secure. Don't let your personal data fall into the wrong hands, [keep it confidential!](#)

Fellowes, which is celebrating 100 years in the office product industry, helps to protect customers and their clients with innovative office solutions including [paper shredders](#), the first line of defence against identity theft, as well as [PrivaScreen™ blackout privacy filters](#) which prevent prying eyes from reading your screen.

Find out more at www.fellowes.com