

8 March 2007

By: Marius Oiaga, Technology News Editor



Bill Gates Votes Yes on New Consumer Privacy Law

To put the control into the hands of consumers

Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates revealed the need for an overhauled consumer privacy law. Gates would vote yes on a privacy law that will firmly put the consumers in control of their personal information. Furthermore, the consumer would also be able to handle the way that their personal information is being used. Gates underlined the necessity for the US Congress to adopt a revamped privacy law in 2007. Gates' perspective over the new privacy law involves not only consumer control, but also government transparency related to the way personal data is being managed, and also its confidentiality status. In this aspect, gates emphasized the need for consumers to be informed when their personal data has been compromised. Microsoft's Co-Founder also underlined the need for balance between security and privacy. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), passed by Congress in 1996 was given by Gates as a negative example of overprotecting customer privacy. "The current state of health IT is surprisingly poor. That is, the amount of paperwork, the information that's incorrect, the overhead in the system of just trying to shuffle things around, and we see that, whether it's in the costs or also in the outcomes. If you're away from your normal location, and you're injured, how do they have access to the information? And so far a lot of the things have just made you sign more privacy release statements," Gates commented on the issue. Another aspect that the new law should focus on is an equilibrium between emerging technologies and consumer privacy, without restricting either of them.