

Press Release on the use of Facial Detection Technology in Advertising

The Data Protection Commissioner (DPC) has recently received a number of queries from members of the public and the media on digital advertisement screens in public spaces. In particular, concerns have been raised about how facial detection technology is being used to determine the advertisements and images to be displayed to individuals on these screens.

The DPC's assessment to date is that the technology being used involves the use of facial detection technology only, with advertising display images being determined during the period while the individual is within the range of the camera.

These screens do not involve the use of facial recognition technology; that is, the technology being used does not involve the recording, analysis, matching, profiling or storage of personally identifiable data.

Accordingly, the data controller obligations of the operators of these digital advertisement screens are being met.

Facial detection technology typically involves detecting the presence of a human face, with some general classification of the individual's facial characteristics (for example, gender or age range).

Facial recognition technology typically involves identifying the presence of a unique individual's face, by matching to specific personal data that is already stored for that unique individual (for example, biometric identification using iris recognition).

The Data Protection Commissioner will continue to monitor how this technology evolves in its capability and in how it is implemented, including data controllers' compliance with their data protection obligations.

Any individuals with queries or concerns on specific installations of this technology should contact info@dataprotection.ie.