

DATA HARVESTING FROM DRIVER'S LICENSES

Driver's Licenses and Private Databases

Scanning your driver's license provides companies an easy and cost-effective way to collect and use your personal information – for their own purposes.

It's simple: All a company has to do is send your license through a card scanner in order to copy and store your information in its database. Information taken from the barcode on the back of a Washington state driver's license includes information about your name, address, date of birth, sex, height, weight, and eye color.

People Should Control Who Gets Their Personal Information

Individuals should be able to choose who gets personal information and how the information is used. If a business wants to collect personal information, it should directly ask for it instead of simply taking it. Reading information on an ID card is OK; storing and using the information without consent is not.

Identification Cards Are for Identification – Let's Keep It That Way

Driver's licenses are intended for government use to certify a person's authorization to drive a motor vehicle. While they are commonly used for identification, they were not intended to facilitate data collection about shopping habits or lifestyle choices. Companies should be prohibited from creating databases about individuals by collecting driver's license data.

Collection of Personal Information Increases Opportunities for Identity Theft

As more personal information is amassed in more databases, the likelihood increases that the information will be misused or stolen. Individuals are not able to protect the accuracy or distribution of their information when it is held by others. Instead, they must trust faceless others to secure it for them. Companies that scan driver's licenses not only put people at risk, but often do so without the individuals ever knowing that they gave up their information.

Individuals Should Have the Right to:

- Consent to releasing their personal information.
- Know in advance what is being done with their personal information – whether it is stored, sold or shared with others.

Privacy Protection Is Needed

In Washington, we need a law that prohibits businesses and other private entities from scanning driver's licenses to collect personal information and prevents the use and distribution of personal information without the driver's consent. Washington's policy-makers should protect our privacy by stopping this surreptitious way of copying, storing and using our personal information without our consent.

