International Post Corporation

Canada Post announces changes following review of its Smartmail Marketing Program

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In September 2023, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada (OPC) released their annual report which raised concerns about Canada Postâ€™s use of address data within its Smartmail Marketing (SMM) program. While Canada Post maintains that the SMM program has always operated within the requirements of the Privacy Act, we respect the work of the OPC and the expectations Canadians have when it comes to their personal information. We therefore announced our intention to conduct an internal review of our SMM products.

The concerns stemmed from an individual complaint to the OPC after Canada Post used operational data combined with names and addresses sourced from publicly available telephone directories to validate an incomplete address for the delivery of an advertising flyer. The report raised an additional concern with the SMM program utilizing aggregated operational data at the postal code level to provide retailers with insights into online shopping trends.

Following our review, we are taking the following actions with the Smartmail Marketing program:

We will no longer offer aggregated online shopping trends at the postal code level, or otherwise, to retailers as we found the effectiveness and use of the data had greatly diminished over time.

Canada Post will discontinue using data from publicly available telephone directories combined with our operational data to validate incomplete addresses.

We will work to further increase transparency and awareness of our direct mail marketing program through our 5,900 post offices and our digital channels, while providing greater visibility on how individuals can opt out of receiving advertising mail.

Canadians trust Canada Post to handle their personal information every day and therefore nothing is more important to us than preserving that trust. We will continue to collaborate and engage in meaningful dialogue with the OPC, ensuring our privacy practices are always evolving to incorporate national and international best practices as well as guidance from regulators. These changes have been shared with the OPC.

Source: Canada Post