



University of East Anglia

Information Services Directorate

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[REDACTED]

27 October 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_15-202)

We have now considered your request of 17 October 2015 for the “*total amount of network capacity in Gbits per second (transit/peering/leased/other etc) held between the University of East Anglia and Janet (AS786)*”. We regret that on this occasion it is not possible to provide the requested information.

In line with section 17 of the Act, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice. The Act contains a number of exemptions that allow public authorities to withhold certain information from release. We have applied the following exemption to your request.

Exemption	Reason
s.31(1)(a), Law enforcement	Release of the requested information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime

We are of the belief that release of the requested information would, or would be likely to, enable anyone wishing to cause a denial of service attack on the University valuable information to plan their attack. Typically a distributed botnet of compromised devices would often be leased for such a purpose, and the requested information would provide the key on just how many devices would be needed for the attack to be successful. A denial of service attack would be classed as a crime under the Computer Misuse Act 1990.

Additionally, understanding our network bandwidth would also be useful for anyone trying to steal the intellectual property of the University by allowing them to know how much data could be transferred and how long it would take. This information, in combination with other information already available to a committed intruder, would benefit such experienced attackers in any attempted penetration of our security and theft of our intellectual property.

Release of any information under the Act represents a disclosure to the world at large. As such we believe to disclose this specific information would expose the University’s IT systems to various types of unlawful attack, consequently prejudicing the prevention of criminal activity.

Having determined that disclosure of this information would expose the University to a real and significant risk of crime, application of the s.31 exemption also requires us to consider the public interest in withholding or disclosing this information.

We acknowledge there is a public interest in increasing transparency in how the University manages its business, and this may include general information about the IT infrastructure underpinning much of the work of the organisation.

However, as with other large organisations, universities are reliant on the smooth running of their IT networks. Maintaining the security of these networks is a significant challenge for all universities, who are increasingly subject to both general cyber security threats and also targeted attempts to obtain information from students and staff.

We believe that there is a very strong public interest in preventing criminal activity that could damage the running of the University and the security of information held by and about individual staff and students. On balance we believe this interest outweighs any lawful public interest in the requested information.

You have the right of appeal against this decision. If you wish to appeal, please set out in writing your reasons for appealing and send to the above address.

You must appeal our decision within 60 calendar days of the date of this letter. Any appeal received after that date will not be considered nor acknowledged. This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

You also have a subsequent right of appeal to the Information Commissioner whose [contact details](#)¹ can be found on their website.

Please quote our reference given at the head of this letter in all correspondence.

Yours sincerely

David Palmer
Information Policy and Compliance Manager
University of East Anglia

¹ https://ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us