

F21RP Research Methods

Professional, Legal, Ethical and Social Issues

Case Study II “Free and Easy Feedback”

As a part of your project you create a website.

You ask your fellow students to give you feedback on the usability of your website via an online questionnaire.

You store all the feedback, unencrypted, along with the name of the person who supplied it in a file in your personal filespace.

In a free-text box for general comments at the end of your questionnaire one, very thoughtful, respondent states –

“The reason I found the font and background colours difficult to distinguish might be due to my dyslexia”.

Six months after you have left university you receive an angry e-mail from the respondent who had stayed on for further study and is now standing for the sabbatical post of President of the Students’ Association.

A fellow candidate is distributing election material alluding to the respondent’s dyslexia.

The respondent is adamant that the only way the information could have been obtained was through the response submitted to your website questionnaire.

You did not release the information personally.

What do you do?

What should you have done?