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Handout Video SLA 6a: Privacy-Sensitive Information

You must treat private and sensitive information very carefully. It often concerns personal and commercial data. For example, if you are doing a work placement at a company, you cannot just simply include all the company data in your report, even if you have collected the data yourself.

What should think about when you are doing this?

- Information which you include in your report may not be traceable to a specific person.
- This means addresses, telephone numbers, or signatures may not occur in your report.
- If you have interviewed someone, you may only mention the name of the interviewee if they have given explicit permission for you to do so.

If you have not obtained permission, you must use a fictitious name. This is referred to as anonymising. You must treat company information in the same way as personal data. Do not include any unnecessary details in your report and be conscientious and respectful when discussing those who commissioned your assignment.

You should also consider carefully whether or not certain information is relevant to your readers. Interviews, for instance, may be of little additional value for your readers. Is it really necessary to include them in your report? If so, include them in an appendix which will not be published. The same applies to other sensitive information, such as personal data. Are you unsure whether or not you may include certain information in your report? In that case ask a lecturer, your supervisor, or the Library.

Finally, carefully handling personal and commercial data does not only apply to your reports, but also to all that you post online, such as on your social media.