

Cowie, J. (2018) Protecting our data. *Geoscientist* vol 28 (4)

to get the new system right before announcing its arrival. More to follow – but you read i

Protecting our data?

Sir, Most of us are aware of the need for data protection. However, I accept that few are as quite as concerned as I; perhaps most rely on things like the Data Protection Act of 1998, due to be tightened up very shortly with the introduction of European legislation under GDPR. The Geological Society has a legal duty to protect our data: things like your address and e-mail will not be given to third parties unless you have signed up for access to the Society's partner libraries and publishers. But there is a difference between 'good' (let alone 'competent') and 'best practice'.

I was saddened that for some events the Society uses a third-party organisation to manage bookings. One must register with a third party account, and what really worried me was the third party's 'privacy' or, more accurately, 'data dissemination' policy.

Past a few beguiling paragraphs ('we will never sell your details to other parties') you hit the worrying stuff. They will freely share your data with their business partners (which, of course, is not selling). So is the Society employing a third party, online event manager undertaking 'competent', 'good' or 'best' data protection practice?

Certainly it is not 'best'; however, it is better than 'competent' as, having contacted the Society, they quickly registered me for an event without sharing my data. Well done, Conference Office staff! However, I encourage the Society to always provide an alternative, data-secure method of registration. Ideally, I'd like it to desist from using third parties completely.

JONATHAN COWIE

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