

Briefing note

Briefing title: Proposal to hold an ICO Lectures event, November 2024

Meeting date: 16 July 2024

Prepared for: ET, for approval

Prepared by: Dave Murphy and ICO Lectures and ICO@40 working groups

Approved by: Angela Balakrishnan

1. Objective of this briefing note

- 1.1. To brief ET on proposal to hold an ICO Lectures event later this year
- 1.2. To secure your approval for project
- 1.3. To highlight opportunities to shape the approach, objective, intended audience to this project

2. Summary

- 2.1. The ICO@40 project focuses on telling people the story of privacy and information rights over the past 40 years. We want to show that privacy and information rights matters now and has always mattered.
- 2.2. A drumbeat of activity is planned from September onwards, including an exhibition of 40 items that show how privacy and information rights intersect in some of the most prominent moments over the past 40 years, with the ICO there to protect people's rights and adapt as technology and society changes.
- 2.3. **We want ET's approval to use the ICO's 40th anniversary as an opportunity to host an in-person networking event in November to grow relationships and influence with key stakeholders.**
- 2.4. The event would launch the 40 items exhibition, and would be focused on demonstrating the importance of the ICO and our impact across ICO25, particularly in safeguarding and empowering people and supporting innovation and growth.
- 2.5. The objectives would be focused on relationships building, with around 120 attendees split between existing stakeholders with whom we wish to strengthen our relationship and influence, and people who we would like to engage in our work for the first time.

3. Who will attend?

3.1. Given the objectives, we have built this proposal from the starting question of 'who do we want in the room?'. An indicative invite list has been drawn up, as part of our approach to building relationships with a new government and with voices that will be influential in policy development over the next five years. With that in mind, our list focuses on building relationships:

- New MPs, Peers, Secs of State, Ministers, SPADs and key officials in government departments (Cabinet Office, DSIT, DBT, Home Office etc). We are actively monitoring Ministerial appointments in key Departments and the invitee list will reflect these.
- Think Tank / NGOs, eg Resolution Foundation, IPPR, Tony Blair Institute, Liberty, Citizen's Advice
- Other regulators, both at a national and devolved level
- Stakeholders linked with causes: AI / biometrics (eg Big Brother Watch, CBI, British Retail Consortium, Usdaw, Apple, EHRC); children's privacy (eg Children's Commissioner, Ofsted, Nat Assn of Head Teachers); adtech (Tech UK, Meta, Google, Microsoft); relevant civil society and community groups

3.2. We would also look to use the event to build relationships related to our ICO25 work. Our invite list could include:

- organisations supporting people whose circumstances mean they place a higher value on managing their data privacy, eg:
 - people living with HIV (eg National Aids Trust, Terrence Higgins Trust)
 - domestic abuse survivors (eg Women's Aid, Refuge)
 - people leaving prison or with criminal convictions (eg NACRO)
 - care leavers; people accessing abortion services; police / armed forces (post PSNI); and voluntary organisation associations.
- organisations supporting people whose circumstances mean they are less able to engage with managing their data privacy (eg young people; people with neurodiversity; people with English as a second language). Example organisations would include MIND and Princes Trust.

4. Creating a compelling event: structure

- 4.1. We want the event to show the ICO has a key role to play in so many of big societal discussions today. The format would be for short talks (around 8 mins) with regular breaks for delegates to network and discuss what they have heard (rather than the traditional Q&A format). The ICO would comper the event (suggest an ET member).
- 4.2. The ICO would provide one of eight speakers (likely John). The remainder of the bill would be made up of speakers who will be interesting to our target audience, with the intention that the majority have worked with the ICO, are aware of our work, or view us positively. For example, the National Aids Trust could talk about the role of privacy to their work, and they have worked closely with us on the recent PACE project.
- 4.3. The talks would be linked by an overarching theme, potentially 'the moment I realised privacy matters' or 'does privacy still matter?'.
4.4. Once we have ET approval for this work, our next focus will be to pull together a draft list of speakers. **We would welcome thought or suggestions from ET.**

5. Creating a compelling event: exhibition

- 5.1. The focal point of our ICO@40 project is to tell the story of the history of the ICO and privacy through an exhibition of 40 different items. Each of these items will answer the question "the moment I realised information rights mattered". The items demonstrate how the ICO has been central to crucial moments that people will remember over the past 40 years. (You will have seen on Iris that we asked for staff to contribute ideas to this list)
- 5.2. The images will form a digital exhibition on a dedicated section of our website, and we are also exploring how we can have a physical exhibition which could be used at different events.
- 5.3. Launching this exhibition at an ICO Lecture event would give us another opportunity to demonstrate the breadth and value of our work to the stakeholders in the room.
- 5.4. To make the most of the opportunity, this would be more than a stand at the back of the room. We would look to make the exhibition integral to the event, potentially with speakers contributing an item to the list. We would support this with a

comms approach to use the event, and launch of the exhibition, to reach a broader audience beyond those attending.

- 5.5. In addition, we are also exploring displaying the exhibition in a public space. We have secured exhibition space in Manchester Central Library from April - June 2025, and are looking at the possibility of a launch event to complement this. We will also be giving staff a first-view of the exhibition at the staff event in September.
- 5.6. **The deadline for staff to contribute object ideas has passed, but we can include any additional ET ideas into our planning.**

6. Further detail

- 6.1. **Timing:** Our proposal is to hold the event in November, and use it as an opportunity to launch the '40 items' project. This fits with our broader calendar, placing the event after the September party conferences and our October DPPC. It would not prevent us 'teasing' some of the items at both our ICO@40 internal event on 19 Sep, or at DPPC.

Key dates

- 19 Sept – Internal launch of ICO@40 exhibition at staff event
 - Late Sept – party conferences (LD 14-17 Sep, Lab 22-25 Sep, Cons 29 – 2 Oct)
 - 8 Oct – Sneak preview of ICO@40 exhibition at DPPC conference. (Note: also potential date for new govt global investment conf)
 - 5 Nov – US election
 - **Nov – ICO Lectures event and launch of ICO@40 digital exhibition**
 - Nov or Dec Global Counsel ICO @ 40 event TBC
 - April – Aug 2025 – Physical exhibition in Manchester Central Library, with launch event.
- 6.2. **Venue:** We will begin exploring venues once we have approval for the principle from ET. One option we would consider is our own London office, building on the success of the People Like Us event.
 - 6.3. **Cost:** We would estimate the cost of holding the event to be around £20k. This money is available within the provisional external comms events budget.

- 6.4. **External event:** In addition to this event, POC are also exploring the option of an externally hosted event with the think tank Global Counsel at their offices in London without a hire cost. This would not be a public event but an invited audience of 40-45 of influential business people with an interest in the UK's international data strategy, AI and future. Lord Peter Mandelson would chair if available and host a fireside chat with John and previous Commissioner Elizabeth Denham. The potential dates are 4 November or 2 December.
- 6.5. **FOI:** As we have considered the Lectures event in the context of the ICO's 40th anniversary, and the ICO causes, it is primarily data protection focused. There could be ways for us to consider transparency and FOI as part of the event, or we could consider this as a separate piece of work (potentially in 2025 linked to the FOI 25th anniversary).

7. Next steps

- 7.1. This paper seeks ET's approval for us to proceed with organising this event. Should that be secured, our next steps would be:
- a) agreeing who to invite, based on our indicative list
 - b) discussing speakers
 - c) agreeing the venue and date
 - d) sending out 'hold the date' messages (we would want invites out by mid August)

Consultees: The ICO Lectures working group is Cat Evans O'Brien, Emily Ryans, Kirsty Keogh, Suzanne Forshaw, Rachel Adams, Natasha Andrews and Daniel Barnett. The ICO@40 '40 items' working group is Ellis Quinn, Lisa Tighe, Andy Thomas, Rashana Vigerstaff and Rachel Clarke. Andrew Rimmer is leading the Global Counsel event.