The Office of the Data Protection Commissioner has released the results of its Sweep of children’s mobile apps and websites, saying that they are a cause for concern.

The Sweep, which in Ireland took place on 14th May 2015, involved the examination of 18 apps and websites, both international and Irish, which are popular with Irish children.

The results found that the apps/websites tested requested a lot of technical data such as cookies (61%), IP address (28%), UID (50%) and geo location (28%). The Sweep team also noted that 45% of apps/websites tested carried third party advertising, much of which would not be relevant to, or appropriate for, children.

John Rogers, Senior Investigations Officer at the ODPC who coordinated the Irish Sweep said: "We feel that websites and apps being targeted at children need to improve greatly in terms of children’s privacy. Excessive data sought, lack of user information and lack of parental controls were among the issues identified. We now intend to carry out a more detailed examination of the sites/apps of concern and contact them requesting remedial action where necessary.”

The Sweep was part of an international effort coordinated by the Global Privacy Enforcement Network, which aims to improve global cooperation around privacy legislation. This was the third annual Sweep, and follows reports on the privacy practice transparency of websites and mobile apps.

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