

### Second Thoughts are Best

Wendy hired a domestic helper, Amy, a month ago. After a Sunday off, Amy did not return to work on Monday and her cellular phone could not be reached. Wendy found it suspicious and began to count her belongings. Discovering that her luxury watch might be lost, she deemed that Amy had stolen her watch and then disappeared. Therefore, Wendy reported the case to police for assistance.

Wendy returned to her office and told her colleagues about her case on the next day. Her colleague, Karen, suggested Wendy to disclose Amy's bad behaviors through the internet by scanning Amy's I.D. copy and posting her name, ID number, photo, etc., to the online forum so as to condemn her. Wendy thought that it was a good idea and planned to take action immediately.

Another colleague, Candy, dissuaded Wendy and claimed, "Please consider it thoroughly. If you do this, you may violate the *Personal Data Protection Act*." Candy continued, "Regarding this theft issue, you have already reported to the police for investigation and it is correct. But if you post Amy's personal data and the suspicion of illegal activities on the internet, you may violate the *Personal Data Protection Act*. According to the *Guidelines on publication of personal data on the Internet* issued by the Office for Personal Data Protection, most organizations and persons, except those public departments exercising some legal authorities, do not have the legitimacy to upload those data related to illegal or criminal acts. If Amy looks into it, you may have to take the legal responsibility."

Candy then downloaded a copy of the *Guidelines on publication of personal data on the Internet* for Wendy's reference. After reading that, Wendy learnt how serious the consequences would be, but she still could not vent to her rage if she just let the police follow up this case without releasing Amy's personal data on the internet.

While Wendy and Karen were discussing to post Amy's personal data on the internet disregard of the consequences, Wendy received Amy's call and realized that her handbag was stolen when she went out on Sunday and then she lost her identification document and cellular phone. She was finally able to make this phone call to Wendy with her friend's assistance. Since she needed to submit documents for applying another identification document, she asked to take a few days off. At the same time, Wendy's husband called in and informed her that he had just found her watch in their car. This reminded Wendy that she left this watch in the car when they went to swim on Sunday, but she just totally forgot it.

Wendy spoke loudly, "It's so lucky that I haven't uploaded her personal data on the internet!"

Candy laughed, "We always make mistakes due to our subjective judgments. Even though we know that we do it wrongly, we still try to seek excuses. Let's imagine that Amy discovers what you do and do the same action, which is, to upload

your personal data on the internet and denounce you as a bad employer, instead of adopting a legal approach. How will you think about that?”

Both Wendy and Karen nodded and said, “We really need to learn respecting and protecting others’ personal data!”

*(The text is provided by the Office for Personal Data Protection. The cases presented here are based on social reality and past real-life cases. Any enquiries about personal data protection can be referred to the Office for Personal Data Protection by phone at 2871 6006.)*