

LOST MOBILE DEVICES PILE UP AT UK AIRPORTS



Let's take a typical situation at a typical busy UK airport. You are a business traveller and you no longer have your laptop computer in your belongings: of course, stolen. You do not bother to check if the device has been handed in because it has, of course, been stolen and nobody would do that anyway. The presumptions in both these cases are very wrong. Indeed, it has been discovered that around 8.500 mobile devices including laptops, iPods and mobile phones are left behind in UK airports every year, many of which are handed in and 60% of which are then auctioned off. Amazingly, 120 laptops per month are handed in at Heathrow airport.

The reason behind this mystery is simple in that passengers who discover they are missing some kind of device just presume it has been stolen or that it will be picked up and never handed in. These presumptions are understandable as airports provide a fair hunting ground for thieves and other suspicious characters. However, statistics show that these items are very often just misplaced and it is always worth checking if they have been handed in. Of the approximate 400 laptops misplaced at major UK airports every year, many end up being auctioned off. There are 2 other factors in this equation worth taking into consideration. The first is that many of these devices belong to companies and not the businessmen themselves, therefore they do not treat the event as a personal loss and some tend to neglect the loss and rely on often-profitable insurance claims.

What is surprising is that, despite such remarkable losses of equipment and data, companies are still neglecting the need to encrypt their hard discs with data. The advice on the basis of these revelations is to never presume that an electronic mobile device has been stolen, always check if it has been handed in and always save data onto a hard drive before travelling.

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