The IT Act confers upon central and state governments, wide-ranging powers to collect data on citizens. While there may be specific conditions under which the government can eavesdrop or collect data on your online activities, it cannot make it public.

There are strict punishments that can be levied on intermediaries and people who release confidential or private data of persons.

**Q. What is the punishment that can be meted out to a person who releases data that should have been kept confidential?**

If a person authorized by the government to have access to electronic record(s) belonging to another person without his/her consent releases that electronic record(s), they can be punished with imprisonment of two years, or a fine which can extend to Rs 1 lakh or both.

If the “person” in question happens to be an intermediary with access to another person’s electronic records which are then released, that is punishable with imprisonment of up to three years, or a fine which may extend to Rs five lakh or both.

**Q. Does the government have any power to confiscate computer resources?**

Yes. If it has reason to believe that any computer resource violates any provision of this Act, the offending article may be confiscated.

--Ends