

Purchase would create information giant

by UPI

ALPHARETTA, Ga. - Reed Elsevier PLC Thursday announced a plan to purchase ChoicePoint Inc. in a deal that would merge personal information about hundreds of millions of people. The \$4.1 billion cash offer would combine Reed Elsevier's LexisNexis Group with Alpharetta, Ga. based ChoicePoint, two companies that collect personal information. Both companies specialize in information dealing with law enforcement, homeland security and other intelligence-related concerns, The Washington Post reported. The purchase would create an information giant that could be susceptible to identity theft and other scams that depend on private information, the newspaper said. "These are companies that will be able to sell very detailed profiles of individuals to businesses, insurers, government agencies and others, but individuals do not currently have a right to see what information about them is being sold to third parties," Executive Director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center Marc Rotenberg told the Post. Chief Executive of the LexisNexis Risk and Information Analytic Group James M. Peck said, "We're going to be able to provide our customers -- financial institutions, healthcare providers, law enforcement -- a better tool to fight identity fraud." "They're actually helping to protect people rather than creating some privacy issues," he said.

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