

Risks with the release of GDPR for internet users

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The release of the new GDPR term is near and will carry with it major changes affecting user data protection and risk. Many processes that allow external access to user data will have to be adjusted as a result.

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) has a direct impact on what will be allowed and what needs to be avoided in countries where the new regulation will be released in May 2018. The German regulation DSGVO (Datenschutzgrundversorgung) reacts to the needs in particular for Germany.

GDPR/DSGVO replaces the current, twenty-year-old privacy policy of the EU. It is a reaction to the fact that the growing use of digital technology to track consumer data and behavior has had significant negative consequences. Protection of personal data will be on a new level and transparency in the processes of use of such data will be enabled. GDPR has a global impact. Although DSGVO is a German regulation, it has a global impact for every organisation handling data with respect to EU and Swiss citizens.

One of the main areas is the use of newsletters, which will be regulated so that users have to give their permission prior to obtaining newsletters. In many countries and on many websites, it is a common practice when downloading a pdf-file that a newsletter has to be accepted. In addition, together with the download, often the users have to send personal information to the company which works with the data or may even sell the data to ecommerce business lines. What can users do to protect themselves when personal data is still within company files or will be sold after the GDPR release? The GDPR release introduces strict new regulations in this area. The new GDPR terms will no longer allow coupling services to obtain and store non-approved personal data.

The use of personal data which is tracked on nearly all webpages by companies which have tracked not only the views of webpages and searches on them but have also used personal data for business purposes will be forbidden: country-wide, EU-wide and even abroad. This process will be regarded as a more serious matter than a simple data-processing agreement between those who visit websites and businesses which use websites.

Google Analytics, which is used in many operations, has already reacted to the new GDPR terms, releasing updates in many of their products to make a difference for their clients based in the EEA and outside of the EEA. Although tracking will be allowed, businesses are advised to carry this out in a way that minimizes the use of personal data, in order to avoid the risk of breaching the GDPR terms. Mass-mailing, tracking and gathering of personal data, downloading of files, address-lists and newsletters without specific approval of the users are now much more strictly regulated and in some cases even prohibited.

All use of personal data for behavior monitoring for marketing or other purposes will be highly problematic in the new GDPR future.