

Alexei Hooks

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Professor McIntier

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Exercise 2 – Executive Summary on Policy and Compliance

Penn State University is a large institution with many departments, workers, and students. With this comes the need to have policies in place so that rules and regulations can be observed within the University's body. This allows departments to follow and judge whether actions taken by an individual were within the University's best interest. When researching the different policies and standards of Penn State University's Information Security website, I came across a regulation that I felt would be interesting to dive deeper into. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was formally introduced and took effect in May of 2018, and has affect on organizations throughout the world.

The General Data Protection Regulation only has real consequences for residents of the European Union (EU) as the regulation replaced the "Data Protection Directive" that the EU residents previously followed. With this new change, the regulation was expanded upon to "require a baseline set of standards for organizations that process personal information" (psu.edu). Within the regulation, organizations are forced to expand the personal privacy rights of citizens and residents of the EU. The purpose of this regulation was to better analyze and protect the movement of personal information while organizations process this data.

Penn State University has put into place their own initiatives to better utilize the GDPR in order to be in compliance with the new regulation. This can be seen through a newly developed "risk-based" GDPR compliance program that includes updated consent processes, data inventories, and more transparency to the students regarding this updated collection of data. The University has made it clear that they want their working and student bodies know about the changes that they have made to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation within their overview of the regulation on their website.

Penn State University, with it's many departments, needs to be aware about what policies and regulations they put into place, and how each team within their departments may be affected. There is no difference with the GDPR as it affects multiple departments within the University and could potentially create issues. These issues may come from the relative newness of the regulation as it has more tasks to complete to add that extra layer of protection of personal data for EU residents and citizens. With the complexity of this new regulation, many departments that deal with personal data everyday would be noticeably met with change. Departments that had to refine their processes with the creation of the GDPR would be Cybersecurity, Webmasters, Bursar's Office, and any other department that holds or uses student's personal data. This wide scope of departments within the University's functions could have had issues if it was not for the descriptive and functional definitions that Penn State laid out with the changes, including why the changes were happening, and how the changes would be seen by the students. These two questions being answered would have helped each of the departments in trying to create better systems to better suit the GDPR. With the large number of international students enrolled at Penn State's physical campuses, or the mass of students enrolled at Penn State World Campus globally, the need for a smooth transition to the General Data Protection Regulation was needed for the University to continue to run effectively.

References

Privacy. Office of Information Security. (n.d.). Retrieved March 17, 2022, from <https://security.psu.edu/privacy/data-protection/>