

# One year on, EU's GDPR sets global standard for data protection

May 24 2019, by Laurent Barthelemy

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The EU's strict data laws have set the global benchmark for protecting personal information online since coming into force a year ago, but some worry that many users have barely noticed the change.

The "General Data Protection Regulation" (GDPR), launched on May 25 last year, enhances the rights of internet users and imposes a wide range of obligations on companies, including that they request explicit consent to use [personal data](#) collected or processed in the European Union.

The EU has billed it as the biggest shake-up of data privacy regulations since the birth of the web, saying it sets new high standards as the world seeks closer scrutiny of tech giants like Facebook, Google and Amazon.

It has also prompted other authorities around the world to strengthen their own data laws.

The US state of California, home to global tech haven Silicon Valley, last year adopted stringent data legislation largely inspired by the GDPR.

Japan meanwhile has worked with the EU to finalise common rules to offer its citizens an equivalent level of data protection as the GDPR.

And Australia plans to significantly strengthen sanctions against companies that breach data privacy rules, following the EU's lead—the GDPR allows fines of up to four percent of a firm's turnover.

## **Companies slow to implement**

But the transition has not always been easy—companies inside and outside the EU have spent a total of hundreds of millions of euros to comply with the regulations.

Much of this has gone to upgrading how firms handle the vast amounts of data streaming in every day.

"Many companies face a major problem: their IT system was designed around providing services, but not around the data, which is constantly

duplicated in all directions, sent to multitudes of providers and suppliers," said Gerome Billois, an expert at the IT service management [company](#) Wavestone.

He added that 31 percent of companies fail to implement the GDPR's "right to be forgotten"—which allows people to have their personal data deleted—because "they don't know precisely where the data is".

Citation: One year on, EU's GDPR sets global standard for data protection (2019, May 24)  
retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-05-year-eu-gdpr-global-standard.html>

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