Digital privacy


When you access the web, you often entrust vital personal information, such as your name, address, and credit card number, to your Internet Service Provider and the website you are using. What happens to this data? Could it fall into the wrong hands? What rights do you have with regards to your personal information?

Common EU rules have been established to ensure that there is a high standard of protection for personal data everywhere in the EU. Currently, the two main strands of the data protection legal framework in the EU are the ePrivacy Directive (Directive on privacy and electronic communications), and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The ePrivacy Directive builds on EU telecoms and data protection frameworks to ensure that all communications over public networks maintain respect for fundamental rights. There should be a high level of data protection and of privacy regardless of the technology used.


The EU GDPR ensures that personal data can only be gathered under strict conditions and for legitimate purposes. Organisations that collect and manage your personal information must also protect it from misuse and respect certain rights.
Informed consent for 'cookies' and other devices

The ePrivacy Directive requires EU countries to ensure that users grant their consent before cookies (small text files stored in the user's web browser) are stored and accessed in computers, smartphones or other device connected to the Internet.

The draft Regulation introduces the concept of “privacy by design” whereby users can choose a higher or lower level of privacy.

Personal data breaches

Telecom operators and Internet Service Providers possess a huge amount of customers' data, which must be kept confidential and secure. However, sometimes sensitive information can be stolen, lost, or illegally accessed. The ePrivacy Directive ensures that the provider reports any personal data breaches to the national authority and informs the subscriber or individual directly of any risk related to personal data or privacy.

The draft Regulation does not include specific provisions on personal data breaches but relies on the relevant provisions of the GDPR.

List of national competent authorities
Learn more about data protection
Follow the latest progress and learn more about getting involved.
Latest

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Annual report lays out the challenges of protecting fundamental rights in the digital age

The European Commission has released its annual report on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU.
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Eurobarometer: Europeans show support for digital principles

According to a special Eurobarometer survey conducted in September and October 2021, an overwhelming majority of EU citizens think that the Internet and digital tools will play an important role in the future.

PRESS RELEASE | 01 December 2021
Commission welcomes political agreement to boost data sharing and support European data spaces

The Commission welcomes the political agreement reached between the European Parliament and EU Member States on a European Data Governance Act.

PRESS RELEASE | 25 November 2021
European Democracy: Commission sets out new laws on political advertising, electoral rights and party funding

This week the European Commission presented a proposal on transparency and targeting of political advertising, as part of measures aimed at protecting election integrity and open democratic debate.

Browse Digital Privacy
Common EU rules guarantee a high standard of privacy online. The EU is committed to ensuring citizens, and particularly children, are safe online.

Proposal for an ePrivacy Regulation
The European Commission's proposal for a Regulation on ePrivacy aims at reinforcing trust and security in the digital world.

**See Also**

Creating a better Internet for kids

The strategy for a better Internet for children provides actions to empower young people as they explore the digital world.