



## GDPR and Marketers

## Overview

As of this writing, it's only a matter of weeks before the new EU-wide General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) takes effect to give EU citizens better control of their personal information. Starting on May 25, 2018, organizations could face heavy penalties for failure to comply.

According to a survey from the [Direct Marketing Association](#), approximately one-quarter (24%) of companies had yet to start a plan of attack for GDPR compliance as of April/May 2017, while only a little more than half of survey respondents thought that their organizations would be ready for the 2018 deadline.

If you are confused or worried about the impact of GDPR on your organization, you are not alone. This document provides an overview of what GDPR means for marketers and how you can take steps now to address it.

## GDPR and marketers

The purpose of the GDPR is to unify data privacy principles and practices across Europe, giving EU citizens more control over their data and increased capacity to dictate how organizations may use that data. If you are marketing to any EU data subjects, regardless of where you are located in the world you will have to comply with the new regulation. The GDPR is likely the most comprehensive business regulation of the last 20 years, and it will affect every company doing business with EU customers in one way or another. It will most certainly have a dramatic effect on digital marketers. To begin with, there will be a lot of confusion. Can you send promotional mails to EU citizens? Can you track someone using their data? Can you share this data with third parties? If a customer wants to leave, do they have the right of erasure, and will companies have to return certain data? These may seem like daunting issues. However, the implementation of GDPR is also an opportunity for marketers to reassess how data is exchanged between

businesses and users. We believe the GDPR will ultimately lead us to become better digital marketers.

## Companies' preparations for GDPR

If you're a marketer doing business with EU clients, it's essential that you evaluate your current data acquisition and customer contact practices and consider how these need to be adjusted in order to ensure compliance. As of May 25, companies will need to show that they are working to comply with the regulations, and those found non-compliant could very well be levied a substantial fine.

Marketers need to research how the GDPR affects them and their organization and thoroughly re-evaluate their outreach and onboarding strategies. Perhaps the most essential step is to establish a consent trail whereby you clearly document exactly which data customers have agreed to share.

## Reviewing responsibility for obtaining consent

Once you've revisited your customer database to ensure their consent statements are GDPR-compliant, the next step you can take as a marketer is to review contracts. Companies' contracts will need to be updated to clarify exactly who has the obligation to obtain consent, and also who has the obligation to provide transparent information about how customers' data is used.

Each EU country will have a Data Protection Authority (DPA) that will coordinate GDPR compliance; in the UK, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is that body.

As a result of all the commotion around the GDPR, the directive will definitely take some time to get used to. However, marketers need to remember that taking measures to comply with the GDPR could ultimately improve the customer experience, which will make us more legitimate digital marketers in the long run.

## Practical tips for marketing with GDPR

- Start auditing your mailing list now.
- Review the way you're currently collecting personal data.
- Invest in a content marketing strategy, by creating white papers, guides and eBooks that visitors can access and download in exchange for sharing their contact information.
- Invite visitors to add themselves to your mailing list by launching a pop-up on your website. You can keep your mailing list neatly segmented by creating specific pop-ups for product news, blog posts and general company news. However, remember to link to your privacy policy to ensure compliance.
- Educate your sales team about social selling techniques.
- Start centralizing your personal data collection into a system, and make sure your users can securely access their own data, review its proposed usage and make any changes as necessary.
- Understand the data you're collecting in more detail.
- Review your current privacy statement and amend it accordingly to comply with GDPR requirements.



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