



commentary

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Data Privacy Management: We're Over Confident and Under Prepared

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BPA Worldwide recently surveyed its members to learn about their data management practices, given the rapidly changing data privacy and protection landscape. The results range from expected, to surprising, to confusing, which pretty much mirrors the current data privacy environment.

Most of the press coverage on data privacy is focused on the FAANG companies (Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, Google); however, we wanted to learn how our members, the mid-size and long-tail media owners, advertisers/agencies and support companies are addressing data privacy and compliance. We asked six questions:

- Q1: How confident are you in your organization's compliance with data privacy laws?
- Q2: Rate your organization's data privacy management and compliance priority.
- Q3: Do you think your organization is allocating sufficient resources to meet and maintain data privacy compliance?
- Q4: Do you have an individual or team responsible for privacy management and compliance?
- Q5: What tools, if any, are you using to assist with your data privacy management and compliance?
- Q6: Which functional group is leading data privacy management and compliance for your company?

Expected Results

Confidence: Respondents are confident in their organization's compliance with data privacy laws. Not a single respondent indicated they had "low" confidence in their organization's compliance; 25% had a medium level of confidence; and 75% had elevated, or high levels of confidence.

Priority: Respondents indicated data privacy compliance is a priority at their organization, with 21% indicating it is a mid-level priority; and 72% indicating it is an elevated, or high priority. Only 7% of respondents indicated data privacy compliance as low priority.

Resources: Respondents indicated their organizations are providing sufficient resources to data privacy management and compliance, with 86% indicating a mid to high degree of confidence their company is allocating enough resources. While 86% is a strong figure, 14% of respondents indicated they did not believe their organizations were providing enough resources.

Surprising Results

Responsibility: 50% of respondents indicated there is a team in place to manage data privacy and compliance. 25% of respondents indicated a single individual is responsible; 18% do not have a team or person charged with managing data privacy and compliance, and 7% don't know.

Functional Groups: 39% of respondents indicated senior management is leading the charge on data privacy management and compliance; 32% indicated their information technology teams are leading the initiative; and 29% indicated the audience development teams are leading the way.

Tools: 50% of respondents indicated they are managing data privacy management and compliance using internal resources. 14% are using consultants. And 53% are using third-party software. Note, this was a multiple response question, so responses exceed 100%.

Confusing Results

Confidence v. Tools: All respondents indicated they are confident with their organization's compliance with data privacy laws, but 50% of respondents indicated they are managing the process with internal resources. Data privacy management and compliance is comprehensive, complex and evolving (as of May 3, 2021, state lawmakers have introduced bills in 26 states). Do these companies have the expertise on staff to navigate a successful path forward?

Confidence v. Resources: All respondents indicated they are confident with their organization's compliance with data privacy laws, but 14% of respondents indicated they do not think their organizations are allocating enough resources to the task. Data privacy management and compliance cannot be managed effectively without adequate funding and resources.

Confidence v. Functional Groups: All respondents indicated they are confident with their organization's compliance with data privacy laws, but only a third of respondents indicated that senior management is leading the initiative. An initiative this important needs senior management in the driver's seat.

Confidence v. Priority: All respondents indicated they are confident with their organization's compliance with data privacy laws, but 7% of respondents indicated data privacy and compliance is a low priority. See above, senior management needs to make this initiative a priority.

Confidence v. Responsibility: All respondents indicated they are confident with their organization's compliance with data privacy laws, but 25% of respondents indicated they do not have a team, person, or they don't know who is charged with managing data privacy and compliance. The size of the organization will determine the size of the group responsible (individual or team), but too many respondents could not identify the person or the team responsible for data privacy management; this is a challenge.

Conclusion

Confidence in data privacy management and compliance is inflated. While the respondents indicated they are confident in their organization's compliance with privacy laws, the responses to the individual elements that support confidence indicate some cause for concern.

Data privacy management and compliance is not only for large organizations – it's for all organizations, especially media companies and the companies that support media companies. These organizations are managing mass quantities of personal data.

To effectively manage data compliance, senior management support is needed, as are sufficient funding and proper tools and expertise. Without all of these, you have over indexed your confidence and, likely, your compliance.

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About BPA Worldwide. [BPA Worldwide](#) is in the business of providing assurance. For 80+ years as a not-for-profit assurance service provider, BPA was originally created by advertisers, advertising agencies and the media industry to audit audience claims used in the buying and selling of advertising. Performing nearly 2,100 annual audits of media channels in more than 20 countries, BPA is a trusted resource for compliance and assurance services.

BPA's services have expanded with the launch of the BPA iCompli brand to assist in the creation of standards and external assurance thereof. We do so for government and industry bodies. BPA [iCompli Technology Assurance](#) provides verification that companies are compliant with industry standards in the digital advertising ecosystem.

BPA [iCompli Sustainability](#) provides gap analysis, competitor benchmarking and external assurance for companies interested in following GRI, SASB, ASTM and ISO sustainability and corporate social responsibility guidelines and standards.

The latest innovation to move the industry forward is the [BPA Media Exchange](#), an online private marketplace which offers automated media solutions for buyers and sellers of digital advertising.