GDPR and Microsoft 365: Streamline your path to compliance
The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a new European Union (EU) privacy law that takes effect on May 25, 2018. It is designed to give individuals control over their personal data and is an important effort for protecting individual rights and freedoms. The GDPR applies to any organizations based in the EU and organizations—wherever they are located—that are selling goods and services in the EU or processing personal data of individuals in the EU.

Organizations that are able to comply with GDPR regulations smoothly and readily will strengthen their relationships with customers by protecting the security and privacy of their data, and providing transparency into policies and principles. Additionally, the robust data management capabilities required to achieve compliance can enable businesses to better engage with customers, empower employees, and optimize the creation and delivery of products and services.

Microsoft has extensive expertise in protecting data, championing privacy, and complying with complex regulations, and currently complies with both EU-U.S. Privacy Shield and EU Model Clauses. We are committed to GDPR compliance across our cloud services and stand behind our promise with contractual commitments for our cloud services.
Empowering customer privacy

Companies that are working to meet GDPR requirements, and who recognize the opportunity that achieving compliance represents, need to consider the overall approach, as well as specific capabilities, when evaluating infrastructure platforms and solutions and the partners who provide them.

In terms of high-level criteria, having security features and compliance capabilities integrated within the solution architecture itself, and working with partners who have a robust datacenter capacity will help accelerate your journey. Through both our own compliance journey and helping our customers work towards GDPR compliance, we have identified these three focus areas as key to successfully meeting compliance obligations:

01 Assessing and managing compliance risk

02 Protecting personal data

03 Streamlining processes
GDPR is a perfect example of how compliance requirements can be complex to interpret, difficult to track, and labor-intensive to implement.

Assessing and managing your risk environment won’t end when you meet your GDPR obligations—you’ll continue to face new regulations and compliance requirements after the May 2018 deadline. Thus, companies need infrastructure and solutions that enable the ability to assess and manage risk and compliance on an ongoing basis.

To help organizations better understand their compliance posture, we’ve introduced Compliance Manager, a new solution to help you manage your compliance risk from a centralized dashboard. Compliance Manager enables you to conduct a real-time risk assessment of all your Microsoft cloud services, while providing actionable insights to help you streamline compliance processes.

47% of executives were unsure what data compliance standards applied to their organizations.
How do you manage an already complex compliance landscape when standards and regulations are constantly changing?
Protecting personal data is at the heart of GDPR. These protections are what your customers want, and in fact what they need if they are going to participate fully in the digital economy.

Complying with such far-reaching regulations goes well beyond any collection of point solutions, let alone a single solution. Companies need to think in terms of an infrastructure and solutions platform that will help them meet customer expectations and GDPR obligations across three key solution areas:
Identity and access management

Protecting your organization at the front door is your first line of defense, and that means you need to control who gets in, while also empowering users to be productive using any application (including third-party), on any device, from anywhere.

Addressing the vulnerability of passwords and the productivity impact of multiple credentials on users is key to improving the effectiveness of your first line of defense. For example, we’ve designed our identity and access management solution and technologies to use capabilities such as Multi-Factor Authentication, Conditional Access, Biometric Verification, and Single Sign-On to secure access to devices, apps, and cloud services while simplifying access for users.

How do you manage & protect personal data in a world where:

- 58% of individuals have accidentally sent sensitive information to the wrong person
- 81% of corporate breaches involve weak or stolen passwords
- 300K new malware samples are created and spread every day
Information protection

Companies need infrastructure and solutions that address four primary elements of successful information protection: detecting sensitive data, both at rest and in transit; classifying sensitive data into distinct categories so that custom controls—such as policies and actions—can be applied; providing appropriate levels of security based on how data has been classified; and lastly, monitoring how sensitive information is used and distributed and being able to respond to unexpected activity or events.

Because you have data being created and shared across boundaries—devices, apps, and cloud services—it’s imperative that you’re able to protect that data throughout its entire lifecycle and across your environment. We’ve developed our information protection solutions to provide an integrated classification, labeling and protection experience, enabling more persistent protection of your data wherever it is—across devices, apps, cloud services and on-premises.

In the spirit of working towards providing a more integrated and unified classification, labeling, and protection model, today we also have a shared labeling schema that will be used across Office 365 and Azure Information Protection. This means that the same default labels will be used across both Office 365 and Azure Information Protection—eliminating the need to create labels in two different places. The common labeling model also helps ensure that sensitive labels—regardless of where they were created—are recognized and understood across Azure Information Protection, Office 365 Advanced Data Governance, Office 365 DLP, and Microsoft Cloud App Security.

Finally, we’ve integrated machine learning capabilities into our information protection solutions—such as Advanced Data Governance and Cloud App Security—to help you automatically classify and set policies to protect your data.
With the increase in number and sophistication of cyberattacks, cyber threats have become a CEO-level issue. Companies need strong defenses across four critical areas of vulnerability: user identity, applications and data, devices, and infrastructure. To better protect these critical areas, we built the Microsoft Intelligent Security Graph, which serves as the connective tissue across Microsoft security solutions.

The Intelligent Security Graph enables our solutions to bring in unified preventative measures that improve the efficiency of protecting, detecting, and responding to security incidents. For example, when we detect a new piece of malware through Office 365 Advanced Threat Protection, we share that information with services like Windows Defender ATP and Advanced Threat Analytics, enabling our solutions to collectively work to protect user identities, apps and data, devices, and infrastructure against advanced persistent threats.

We analyze:

- **450B** authentications per month across our cloud services
- **400B** emails scanned for spam and malware
- **Over 1B** enterprise and consumer devices updated monthly
- **18B+** Bing scans per month
The GDPR is also an opportunity for companies to make sure their compliance program is as efficient as possible. GDPR requires companies to ensure that they can provide customers access to their personal data, which means you must be able to search and quickly identify personal data, export the results, and accurately record the process. A streamlined process benefits the company in terms of productivity while providing a better experience for the customer.

We’ve built audit-ready tools into our solutions, enabling you to streamline your reporting process. For example, Office 365 Content Search, an eDiscovery tool with new and improved scaling and performance capabilities, lets you search for over 80 different sensitive data types as well as create custom types. Content Search lets you run very large eDiscovery searches across Office 365 applications and non-Office 365 data, providing improved consistency and efficiencies.
Choosing a platform you can trust, and verify

We’ve taken a principled approach to building privacy, security, compliance, and transparency into everything we do, which means that they are integrated into the products and services you use every day. We’ve brought the best of Windows 10, Office 365, and Enterprise Mobility + Security together into a solution called Microsoft 365, to deliver an integrated, complete solution that empowers everyone to be creative and work together, securely.

The significant investments Microsoft has made in security are realized in several areas through Microsoft 365. First, the Microsoft cloud has the largest certified compliance portfolio, with services architected to be secure by design, the most extensive global datacenter footprint in the industry, a breadth of integrated solutions that leverage AI, as well as our global partner ecosystem.
Learn more about how Microsoft 365 can help you empower your customers’ privacy and achieve GDPR compliance fast.

Learn more about Microsoft 365 and GDPR