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5 Important Data Privacy Tips Your Employees Must Know

Data Privacy Day (known as Data Protection Day in Europe) is an international holiday that occurs on January 28th every year to raise awareness about data privacy and promote data protection best practices. With new data breaches emerging daily, it's important for organizations to provide employees with actionable data protection tips and recommendations.

Talk to your employees today to help them understand when, where, and how their data could be compromised – and how to prevent that from happening. Share these tips and celebrate Data Privacy Day at your organization.

Tip 1: Just because you can't see files on your desktop/laptop computer doesn't mean they're gone.

When you drag files to the Recycle Bin on your computer and/or reformat your hard drive, the data isn't really gone. Imagine your hard drive is like a library. To find the book you want, you get a reference number from the library's database – and that leads you to the section of the library where the book can be physically found. Deleting the file is like deleting that reference number. But the book still remains in the library, and it just becomes a case of using more sophisticated methods to locate it. Secure erasure of your files is the best way to make sure your data is truly destroyed.

Tip 2: Beware of what you're syncing.

How often do you charge your personal mobile by plugging a USB cord into your company laptop? How often do you charge your work phone by plugging a USB cord into your personal laptop? Chances are, you take these actions multiple times a day. Once connected, a lot of devices begin automatically syncing without notice and transferring files between the two. If you're plugging devices into one another, beware of which files you may be transferring and whether sensitive information like photos, emails, contacts, and passwords could end up being duplicated in places you're not aware of.

Tip 3: Be mindful what you share with AI tools.

AI platforms like ChatGPT may use your data for training their own models, so sharing confidential personal or company information without proper oversight can lead to unintended consequences. It's best practice to avoid sharing proprietary or confidential information with AI models unless you are sure about how data is being handled and the platforms have been approved by your employer.

Tip 4: New phone? Be careful what happens with the old one.

When you swap or replace a device such as your mobile, you need to decide what to do with the old one. If you're sending it to a carrier, manufacturer, or resale company, how will they guarantee all your personal data will be destroyed? Investigate how the company disposes of devices, and look for Blancco to know your device will be simply, securely erased.

Tip 5: When you close an account with a business or website, ask for proof.

When the personal information of over 32 million registered users of dating website Ashley Madison was leaked, the consequences were profound. Many users paid for the site's "Full Delete" program on the understanding that their information would be completely removed from the site. But that didn't actually happen and users had their data resurface. The lesson here? Always ask for proof that your data has been permanently erased from all locations where it's being stored. Data protection and privacy laws—such as the GDPR and CCPA—require organizations to comply with your data erasure request.

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