



Watch the video highlights of the seminar on our [YouTube channel!](#)

SECURING PERSONAL DATA FOR A COMPETITIVE EDGE

The Personal Data Protection Seminar 2015 provides a platform for organisations to share best practices as well as insights into data protection practices and challenges.

Personal data protection and cyber security are key to the success of Singapore's Smart Nation vision. "If we don't do it right, people will not have the confidence to work with and engage our companies," said Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Communications and Information. "On the other hand, if we succeed in creating a robust data protection framework, backed by credible data security measures, we will be able to create a trusted environment for businesses and cement Singapore's position as a trusted global hub."

MORE ASSISTANCE FOR SMES

Dr Yaacob was speaking at the Personal Data Protection (PDP) Seminar 2015, which was held at The Ritz-Carlton on 8 May. The theme of the seminar was "Securing Personal Data for a Competitive Edge" and in line with this, Dr Yaacob also announced new initiatives to assist small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in complying with the PDPA.

The Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC) and the Law Society of Singapore (LSS) have introduced a legal advice scheme to help SMEs by reviewing a Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) checklist with the SME to make an initial assessment of whether the SME has complied with PDPA, and to advise on possible next steps.

PDPC has also worked with the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore to release two guides aimed at helping organisations to strengthen their IT security practices, which is an important element in the protection of personal data. Available on the PDPC web site, the first guide provides organisations with a series of steps on how to protect personal data in electronic form, while the second is a guide on managing and responding to data breaches.



"If we don't do it right, people will not have the confidence to work with and engage our companies."

- Dr Yaacob Ibrahim,
Minister for Communications and Information

SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS TO PROTECTING PERSONAL DATA

In his opening remarks at the seminar, PDPC Chairman Mr Leong Keng Thai pointed out that there are significant benefits for organisations that take personal data protection seriously and a real cost for those who do not. "It is not only personal data that is lost; the reputations of the organisations involved are also affected," he said.



"It is not only personal data that is lost; the reputations of the organisations involved are also affected."

- Mr Leong Keng Thai, PDPC Chairman,
on data incidents

It is thus very important that organisations implement measures to secure personal data as the number of data breaches grows in an increasingly data-driven world.

Simply withholding data was not the answer, said Mr Leong. A competitive economy will need to leverage data and the Internet of Things (IoT) to deliver services that were not available before. In a Smart Nation, even more data will be used, transmitted and stored, and the data privacy and protection framework must be robust enough to support these technology developments.

DATA PROTECTION LAWS HAVE TO KEEP UP WITH "NEW REALITIES"

Delivering the seminar's keynote address on "Protecting Personal Data and the Role of the Regulator", Mr John Edwards, Privacy Commissioner, Office of the Privacy Commissioner (New Zealand), said data privacy and protection laws have to be kept up to date with "new realities". He cited the example of New Zealand's personal data protection laws which were introduced in 1993 during the pre-Internet era. Today, a lot more business is conducted online and with electronic media, the stakes are higher because the potential for harm is exponentially greater.



"Data privacy and protection laws have to be kept up to date with new realities."

- Mr John Edwards,
Privacy Commissioner,
Office of the Privacy Commissioner
(New Zealand)

"Organisations are investing a great deal of resources in getting their personal information and data protection practices up to date and future facing. They are doing this because the consequences of getting it wrong can be even higher than the cost of that investment," said Mr Edwards.

He cited examples of American organisations, such as Target and AT&T, who paid a hefty price when they suffered data breaches leading to loss of their customers' personal data. He added that in many ways, good data protection laws support good business practices and compliance should result in a net benefit rather than a net loss to the organisation.

The PDP Seminar 2015 also featured panel discussions on data security and the intersection between security and privacy, risk assessment and management, and the challenges involved in ensuring data privacy and protection in the era of big data.

Held at The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore on 8 May, the PDP Seminar 2015 was attended by about 700 representatives from various sectors.