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Are you dealing with your customers' sensitive information properly?

Storetec's Grace Schneider asks what could happen if you fail to protect your customers' sensitive information and outlines some benefits of digitisation from a compliance perspective

All businesses today will have some form of process in place to protect their customers' information, but if your customers are your most important relationship, how can you make sure that you're doing all you can to uphold your duties to them? Digitising your documents should be part of your answer.

More than losing your customers' trust, a serious breach of the UK GDPR could cost you up to £17.5m or 4% of your total annual worldwide turnover. Therefore, we have put together the undeniable benefits of digitising your valuable paper records:

Increased security: Whilst documents exist in hard

format alone, they are always at risk of loss, theft, or damage. By digitising your documents, this single point of failure is removed as documents can be securely stored and backed up to ensure they are never at risk of permanent loss.

You might be more worried about cyber theft but, in both 2019 and 2020, there were more reported incidents of data breaches resulting from paperwork being lost or stolen than resulting from ransomware. According to ICO, one London pharmacy was fined £275,000 for failing to ensure the security of special

category data. The company left 500,000 documents in unlocked containers at the back of its premises, including the names, addresses, dates of birth, NHS numbers and medical information of multiple people.

For employees working remotely, most companies will use a virtual private network (VPN) to create an encrypted connection from the user's computer to their company IT system. Accessing confidential electronic records from home, without the correct security provisions in place, may put businesses at risk of cyber theft and fraud.

Article 32 of GDPR states that businesses should implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure document security.

Meaning, if employees are working from home and accessing confidential personal



"ACCESSING CONFIDENTIAL ELECTRONIC RECORDS FROM HOME, WITHOUT THE CORRECT SECURITY PROVISIONS IN PLACE, MAY PUT BUSINESSES AT RISK OF CYBER THEFT AND FRAUD. ARTICLE 32 OF GDPR STATES THAT BUSINESSES SHOULD IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE TECHNICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL MEASURES TO ENSURE DOCUMENT SECURITY. MEANING, IF EMPLOYEES ARE WORKING FROM HOME AND ACCESSING CONFIDENTIAL PERSONAL INFORMATION, THERE MUST BE APPROPRIATE SECURITY PROVISIONS IN PLACE SUCH AS DATA ENCRYPTION."

information, there must be appropriate security provisions in place such as data encryption. Storetec's cloud-based document management system FreeDocs allows for secure remote working as data encryption is a key feature of the database. Dedicated 'Super Users' on FreeDocs can also restrict user access.

This means employees working remotely could potentially be restricted over printing, emailing and accessing certain confidential documents. Being a cloud-based system, FreeDocs has the benefit of being accessible from any device with internet access, from anywhere across the world.

Retention periods: It is your duty under GDPR not to keep personal information for longer than you need it - for most businesses, this means setting standard retention periods. But it can be difficult and time-consuming to comply if you are holding physical paper files.

With digitised files, you can automate the process by applying different retention periods to different file types. Within FreeDocs Cloud, you will get notifications when files are coming up to their retention period, imagine the time and resources saved. Implementing a concrete policy helps to preserve compliance for the future and can help build trust with prospective clients or future customers.

Right of access: GDPR allows your customers to ask for a copy of any personal data you may hold on them. Think this won't affect your business? Think again. Right of access complaints made up 37% of all data protection complaints in the UK last year, making it the top reason for complaints.

Paper documents make it a lot harder to locate a file within an archive room within

a limited amount of time. Our proprietary document management system, FreeDocs Cloud, gives you the ability to search millions of documents in a matter of seconds. Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software is applied to make the PDFs fully text searchable allowing for a full keyword content search over the database, bringing up any PDFs that contain the keyword. You can also search for multiple keywords using the 'AND' search function, such as a name and date. This full text search capability ensures you will be able to comply with any data requests from your customers within the limited time specified under GDPR.

NOT JUST FINANCIAL

Data breaches aren't just about fines, the impact of a breach on an organisation's reputation can be immense - 33% of businesses say they've lost customers and that it's taken a lot of time and resources to put it right. Research has also found 41% of customers say they'll never return to a business after a security issue and 44% say they'll stop spending at least temporarily.

More than losing your customers' trust, a serious breach of the UK GDPR could cost you up to £17.5m or 4% of your total annual worldwide turnover. Don't put your business at risk - get in touch with us today to speak about how we can help your data security and compliance. Take advantage of our document management consultancy service, we can work with you to review your archive and decide on the documentation which must be retained and what can be destroyed and recycled. Contact us today to book in a free on-site audit at your convenience. Otherwise, we are available for remote calls on Teams/Zoom or any other preferred platform.

More info: www.storetec.net

STORETEC

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- Document Storage
- Microfilm & Microfiche Scanning
- FreeDocs Document Management System
- Records Management Consultancy Services



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Compliance Product of the Year – FreeDocs Document Management 2020

Records Management Product of the Year 2019

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