

GDPR AND THE GÉANT COMMUNITY

And the award for hottest topic of 2018 goes to... GDPR! The General Data Protection Regulation, implemented on 25 May, has opened our eyes to a variety of unexplored questions and given us insights into the fields of privacy and data protection. Every piece of information that could identify a European citizen became a delicate piece of property that couldn't be stored and processed without being GDPR compliant anymore.

How did GÉANT prepare for this and what has happened since? What are the future prospects of dealing with privacy and data protection? CONNECT spoke with Ana Alves, Data Protection Officer at GÉANT, to answer these questions.

What is GDPR and what measures did GÉANT take to protect users?

GDPR, as we like to abbreviate the General Data Protection Regulation, has its main goal to protect citizens' privacy, and give them full ownership of their rights. The right to access, to correct or to delete their own personal data, the right to know how their personal data will be processed, stored and for how long it will be retained.

With GÉANT running services and projects with educational institutions and other related areas, it was important to ensure that all the GDPR requirements were in place to safeguard users' rights and, most importantly, to keep the transparency in all processes and actions that we take with users' personal data.

To achieve this the GDPR team worked closely with the Security and Software Development teams, under the management of Chief Development Officer Shaun Cairns, to guarantee the right security controls and privacy by design for our services.

The development and enforcement of significant procedures has also been important to consolidate the knowledge gained with internal methodologies and support areas such as Incident Management or Privacy Risk Assessment. Equally, the work done around the GÉANT events, conferences

and training sessions has also been highly important, ensuring the best of our services to our attendees, speakers or trainees and always concerned with their privacy.

In June this year, Magdalena Rzaca joined the GDPR team and is working on revising agreements and ensuring that contractual relationships with third parties are protected by data protection clauses. Across the GÉANT services, a tremendous amount of work has been completed to put in place the privacy notices and the subject Access Request Procedure for our services as well, to create an efficient communication channel and promote the awareness needed to protect user's personal data.

For GÉANT the most important thing is to maintain the trust of our community in our services and professionalism, with the certainty that we are giving our best to achieve it.

Can GÉANT support the community with GDPR related issues, and if so, how?

I like to think that both sides are supporting each other. We are extremely conscious of our role and responsibilities towards the community. During my time at GÉANT, I could see that a lot of work was done, in particular by Nicole Harris, Head of Trust and Identity Operations. With years of experience and GDPR knowledge, she has been supporting and providing the best advice to the community. It is also amazing to understand the magnitude of cooperation between parties involved, sharing information, case studies, latest news about this hot subject



Picture
Ana Alves,
Data Protection
Officer

and participating in the TF-DPR (Task Force on Data Protection Regulation) meetings coordinated by GÉANT, where GDPR specialists from the community debate real issues in their daily work and present useful information about their experiences.

The Task Force meetings represent a significant measure to spread information through the community. GDPR is not over, so it is important to keep these initiatives up, involving more people interested in learning more about it.

The GDPR team can be reached at gdpr@geant.org.