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## What is Data Privacy and Why online data privacy matters, now more than ever?

How many times have you mechanically clicked on the “Agree” or “I Accept” button on an End-User License Agreement (EULA) that you didn’t bother to read or understand? Probably, just a few hundred times, right? Or worse, give access to unknown sources on your mobile phone, laptop, computer without much ado? You see, these small actions do put our personal data at the risk of being breached. What is data privacy though? Why data privacy should matter to you as a consumer or as a company?

Data privacy refers to how a piece of information—or data—is being collected, analyzed, shared and used on its relative importance. For instance, you will instantly share your name to a stranger while introducing yourself but when it comes to sharing more personal details, let’s say, place where you live or work or maybe your age etc. Would you be hesitant? Well at least not until you become more acquainted with that person. Let’s focus on business now, how data privacy is different for them?

For a business, confidential data goes beyond the personal information of its employees and customers. It also includes the information that helps a company operate, whether it’s proprietary research and development data or financial information or a business plan that shows how it’s spending and investing its money. So, it’s sufficed to say that data privacy is an important concern for both, an individual and a company. Recently, Google has announced to shut down its social network Google+ for its consumers. According to a report published in *The Wall Street Journal*, “The company discovered a bug in one of Google+’s People APIs that allowed apps access to data from Google+ profiles that weren’t marked as public. It included static data fields such as name, email, occupation, gender and age.” Though it did not include any crucial information from Google+ posts and there was no evidence that it was improperly accessed,

but it was a [massive data exposure](#) and jolt to Google’s reputation ultimately leading to the shutdown of Google+ over the course of ten months. That’s the power of privacy. If an IT giant like Google can be hit by a bug that compromises data privacy, imagine those companies who are not even doing anything to keep their own as well as their customers’ data safe? And what about the consumers who take their data privacy lightly because they presumed it to be protected by Google? It is imperative for a company as well as a consumer that they take necessary steps to safeguard their data simply because it’s *their* personal or confidential data.

The importance of data privacy is more than that, it is not just about being cautious or just a legal necessity. There are several risks attached to unprotected confidential data as personal data can be stolen or misused in a malicious way, and for a company data protection is crucial, for them to protect and maintain their business especially when it comes to their intellectual property or customers data. If a company keeps its confidential data protected through various software and with additional policies or codes of conduct from any breach then ought to give the same respect to the privacy of its customers.

Data privacy matters to your online presence and brand reputation but what should you do to demonstrate to your customers that their privacy is important to your company. Watch this space for some answers. The more you know about data privacy and how to protect it, the better you’ll be able to protect your data and for companies, your brand from a large number of risks.