MANAGING PERSONAL INFORMATION WITH ISO/IEC 27701

Since 2016 and within a relatively short period of time, modern data protection legislation has been passed in many countries around the world. The most notable is the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which has shaped the requirements for organisations to ensure the rights of data subjects when processing their personal data. The relative speed at which this legislation has been established has left some organisations unable to adequately respond, and well-publicised breaches have occurred.

Despite the well signposted roll out of the GDPR, it doesn’t provide specific guidance on what measures should be taken to ensure compliance with its requirements. Further, existing standards do not have, in most cases, a robust enough set of clauses or controls to ensure data privacy is addressed in full through implementation of management systems.

The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) have developed ISO 27701 to provide the necessary guidance for businesses to effectively address data privacy and ensure the gap between existing management systems requirements and global privacy data legislations are effectively bridged.

GDPR – An overview of legislation

The GDPR was adopted by the EU in April 2016 and replaced the EU Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC. This new legislation has initiated obligations to any organisation with data processing responsibilities, and is applicable to organisations outside of the EU too. It has harmonised privacy legislation across the EEA.

Any non-EU entity offering goods or services to individuals located in the EU are also bound by the requirements of the GDPR. Businesses and organisations with sizeable personal data processing requirements are uniquely affected and ensuring conformity to the legislation is paramount.

Organisations must have a lawful basis for processing personal data and only process it for a specified purpose. Individuals have the right to request a copy of all data that is held on them, including an explanation of how such data is used and if third parties have access. Individuals may request for their data profile to be passed to another data processor; furthermore, individuals also have the right to withdraw consent for processing and to request for data that is no longer required to be erased.

Organisations and individuals who process personal data are now required to have appropriate security controls in place to ensure confidentiality of the data they hold or process. Personal data can be transferred outside of the EU, but only to countries which are considered to have adequate legislation for preserving the rights of EU data subjects.

Notifications of data breaches must be submitted to the supervisory authority; for the UK this is the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) within 72 hours of recognition of a breach being identified. The ICO is the UK’s independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.

Further guidance can be found through the UK Government Data Protection Act 2018 page.
WHAT IS ISO 27701 AND WHY IS IT NEEDED?

In common with many privacy legislations around the world, there is very little guidance on how to implement processes to be compliant with GDPR. ISO 27701:2019 is a privacy extension to the international information security management standard, ISO 27001 (ISO 27701 Security techniques – Extension to ISO 27001 and ISO 27002 for privacy information management – Requirements and guidelines).

ISO 27701 details the requirements for and gives the required guidance for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and improvement of a Privacy Information Management System (PIMS). The standard is based on the requirements, control objectives and controls of the ISO 27001 standard, and includes a suite of privacy requirements, controls and control objectives.

Concepts of information security are familiar to organisations which already have an operational Information Security Management System (ISMS). The new PIMS will ensure that organisations have comprehensive and universally applicable data governance which directly map to their jurisdictions' legislative requirements.

The standard was drafted with input from experts and data protection authorities from around the world, including the European Data Protection Board. Data protection legislations from all continents were taken into account. It is close to GDPR and each clause maps to corresponding GDPR articles.

But ISO 27701 is not GDPR specific; it is a global standard. And it represents the state of the art in terms of privacy protection. Organisations implementing it will demonstrate a proactive approach to personal data protection.

BOLT ON TO ISO 27001

ISO 27701 differs slightly in that the standard requires an existing management system to attach to. Not every clause and control is applicable in all instances.

The requirements of the standard are split in to the four groups listed below:

1. PIMS requirements related to ISO 27001 are outlined at clause 5
2. PIMS requirements related to ISO 27002 are outlined at clause 6
3. PIMS guidance for Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Controllers are outlined at clause 7
4. PIMS guidance for PII Processors are outlined at clause 8

Additionally, applicable controls are outlined within annexes to the main body of the standard.

The following can be used as a guide for relevance:

1. Annex A lists all applicable controls for PII Controllers.
2. Annex B lists all applicable controls for PII Processors.
4. Annex D maps the provisions of ISO 27701 against the GDPR.

In most circumstances, organisations with existing certification to ISO 27001 should start at Annex F to understand how the application of PIMS fits in to their existing ISO 27001 ISMS. This annex refers to three instances for application of the standard:

- Application of security standards as is
- Additions to security standards
- Refinement of security standards

Clauses 5 to 8 within PIMS extend the requirements of ISO 27001 to incorporate PII considerations. Clause 5 provides PIMS-specific guidance concerning the information security requirements in ISO 27001 appropriate to an organisation which acts as either a PII controller or processor. Organisations should implement a PIMS Statement of Applicability (SoA) which is influenced by whether they are a controller or processor (or both). Organisations can create a combined ISMS-PIMS and extend their ISMS SoA to include the PIMS controls.

Annex A + Clause 6 = 37 enhanced controls
Annex A + Clause 7 = 31 new controls for controllers
Annex A - Clause 8 = 18 new controls for processors
Detailed below are the additional considerations within clause 5 of the ISO 27701 standard which may be observed as extra to existing ISMS requirements:

5.1 The requirements of ISO 27001 must be extended to the protection of privacy as potentially affected by the processing of PII. A glance at Annex F provides a table which gives visual indication of how this will look.

5.2.1 An additional requirement to ISO 27001 clause 4.1 is to outline that an organisation will determine its role as a PII Controller and/or processor. Additionally external and internal factors that are relevant to context and affect the ability to achieve outcomes of its PIMS require indication. This includes any relevant legislation adherence already in place as a consideration within the existing ISMS or contractual requirements which hitherto had been identified in differing clauses or Annex controls within ISO 27001.

Where an organisation has both PII controller and PII processor roles identified, separate roles must be determined, each of which will be subject to a separate control set.

5.2.2 A consideration extra to ISO 27001 clause 4.2 is the requirement to include interested parties with responsibilities associated with the processing of PII. This can include customers, which again is not something which may have previously been considered in an ISO 27001 ISMS. Additionally requirements which are relevant to the processing of PII can be determined by legal requirements, contractual obligations or self-identified objectives.

5.2.3 The scope of the ISMS is required by ISO 27001 clause 4.3. Additional PIMS factors for scope include an organisation including processing of PII. PIMS scope determination, therefore, can require a revision of the ISMS because of the extension to interpretation of what constitutes information security in ISO 27701 clause 5.1.

5.2.4 Further to ISO 27001 clause 4.4 an organisation is required within the new standard to establish, implement, maintain and continually improve a PIMS in accordance with the requirements of ISO 27001:2013 Clauses 4 to 10, extended by the requirements in Clause 5.

5.3 Within ISO 27001, organisations are required to demonstrate commitment to the ISMS through leadership initiatives and the creation of policies, roles & responsibilities and guidance. Likewise, the PIMS requires a similar input from the top management along with relevant PIMS specific interpretations as indicated at 5.1 to ISO 27701 which covers all mirrored aspects of clause 5 of the ISMS.

5.4.1 The requirements of ISO 27001 to address risks and opportunities require augmentation with the considerations of clause 5.1 in ISO 27701. Furthermore, Information Security risk assessments identified within ISO 27001 are applicable with the following additional requirements:

1. The organisation shall apply the information security risk assessment process to identify risks associated with the loss of confidentiality, integrity and availability, within the scope of the PIMS.
2. The organisation shall apply privacy risk assessment process to identify risks related to the processing of PII, within the scope of the PIMS.
3. The organisation shall ensure throughout the risk assessment processes that the relationship between information security and PII protection is appropriately managed.

This can be an integrated risk assessment process or parallel processes which are controlled separately; this depends entirely on the organisation to determine.

Additionally, ISO 27001 clause 6.1.2.d is refined to include an assessment for potential consequences for both the organisation and PII principals that would result if the risks identified during the 6.1.2.c (ISO 27001) were to materialise.

Further considerations are given to the Statement of Applicability which would have been generated by the organisation when implementing the ISO 27001 ISMS. As an organisation would have encountered an “opt out and justify” approach to produce the SoA in the first instance, likewise for the PIMS, not all control objectives and controls listed within Annex areas need to be included during PIMS implementation. Justification for exclusion where controls are not deemed necessary can be identified.

5.4.2 Information security objectives from the organisations ISMS from clause 6.2 augmented by the interpretation of ISO 27701 clause 5.1 must be considered.

5.5 Support considerations from ISO 27001 at clause 7 are applicable along with the additional interpretation specified within ISO 27701 clause 5.1.

5.6 Operational consideration from ISO 27001 at clause 8 including risk treatment planning are similarly required by ISO 27701 along with additional information which is identified through addressing clause 5.1 to the latter standard.

5.7/5.8 Similarly; the Monitoring/Measuring & Improvement considerations which are live within an existing ISMS require further augmentation from the considerations given to clause 5.1 to ISO 27701.

The processes identified above indicate that clause 5.1 in the new standard is a key point to the implementation of a PIMS. The extension to the protection of privacy for processing PII is a key element to implementation. It guides the consideration to be given when addressing the further clause areas of ISO 27701.
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We have been using JMT Quality Consultants as our ISO external auditor for the past couple of years and I wish that we had done so much earlier! We have found them to be very professional, providing not only a comprehensive audit report but additional ideas for improvement and contacts for our company that we could additionally benefit from.

SAFETYBOSS

The professionalism and work-ethic Clark from CBO Associates showed during our ISO 9001 process was excellent. Clark is a professional in his delivery, a knowledgeable person that offers a high level of service which makes him an ideal QHSE Consultant. His ideas and delivery are both creative and effective.

CLARK-IT, ABERDEENSHIRE

Since being certified to ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 we have relied on Martin Giddens from Morton Hodson for support with our annual process auditing. Martin understands our business and always advises us of which changes to guidance and regulations apply and what we need to do to implement them. Martin’s expertise ensure that staying compliant is simple.

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