GDPR Explained

The GDPR gives EU citizens and residents control over their personal data. It broadly defines personal data as any information that can be used on its own or with other data to identify an individual. With permission, an organization can use the data, but each person owns their personal data and can withdraw the right of an organization to use that data. An EU resident can monitor the use of their data, decide who can access it, and can demand its return to them.

Organizations must put in place policies, procedures and technologies now to ensure they can protect the personally identifiable information (PII) of EU citizens and residents ahead of the GDPR May 25th, 2018 deadline. That is not a lot of time given the complexity of GDPR requirements and the size of fines for GDPR compliance violations.

Here are the significant provisions of the GDPR:

- **Big Fines for Violations** - GDPR compliance violations can be huge: 4% of global revenue or €20 million whichever is greater.
- **Data Protection Officer Required** - Companies or public entities with more than 250 employees must have a Data Protection Officer who is personally liable for PII data breaches.
- **Strict Breach Notification** - If a material data breach occurs, companies have 72 hours to notify authorities of that breach.
- **Global Reach** - Any organization located anywhere in the world doing business with EU residents must comply with GDPR rules.
- **Comprehensive Monitoring and Security Controls** - Organizations must establish strict PII access monitoring, documentation, and security controls.
- **On-Demand Demonstration of Data Security** - Organizations must be able to demonstrate their data protection process at any time
- **Data Protection Impact Assessment** - Organizations must assess the scope, purpose, and sensitivity of data processed.
- **Applies to Organization Affiliates** - GDPR rules apply not just to companies collecting PII, but to any affiliated companies, such as subcontractors, vendors, or distributors, who have access to that PII.
- **Consent** - Consent needs to be obtained from EU citizens on the use of their personal data.

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