



## **Data Protection Excellence Centre warns of more COVID-19-related privacy breaches in 2022 due to digitalisation, emerging technologies and work-from-home surveillance**

*Continued breaches are part of Five Key Regional Data Protection Trends it has forecasted for 2022*

January 6, 2022 – The Data Protection Excellence (DPEX) Centre, the learning and research arm of Straits Interactive, released its data protection trends report for 2022 today. It warned, as its #1 trend, that the ASEAN region would, for two reasons, see more specific privacy breaches attributed to continued pandemic conditions.

First, as the impact of the Omicron variance is being felt worldwide, digitalisation and surveillance efforts are expected to continue at government and organisation levels. This will create more privacy issues and breaches due to the following factors:

- Verifying and monitoring vaccinated individuals and those with COVID-19 for legitimate purpose, but with privacy impacts on individuals
- Stricter contact tracing requirements through vaccinated travel lanes, including mandatory requirements to download contact tracing mobile apps at travel destinations
- Digitalisation and transformational activities of companies with little regard to security / privacy requirements at the design level

In addition, due to continued lockdowns and work-from-home requirements, DPEX Centre expects continued breaches of data protection laws to result from:

- Increased spamming activities from companies
- Software for monitoring employees being more prevalent and the use of new intrusive technologies (including artificial intelligence or AI), especially in mobile apps
- Continued cyberattacks, as well as identity theft and phishing, involving sophisticated technologies (for example, deepfakes)

“Expect to see more sophisticated breaches created by the pandemic situation in 2022 – whether it involves a data breach in a contact tracing app, unauthorised use of COVID-19-related personal data, or via the use of new privacy-intrusive

technologies to profile or perform surveillance of individuals.”, said Kevin Shepherdson, CEO of Straits Interactive.

“Combine this with newly updated or newly introduced data protection laws such as China’s Personal Information Protection Law, as well as the upcoming laws in the region, in India, Thailand and Indonesia laws, we expect demand for [data protection expertise](#) and data protection officers, or DPOs, to continue to grow.”

The report summarises Five Key Regional Data Protection Trends:

1. Ongoing data and privacy breaches, especially due to COVID-19
2. Intrusive home surveillance due to work-from-home or WFH
3. Continued interest in [Data Protection Trustmark](#) and certification for both organisations and individuals
4. More regulatory attention on Big Tech, including social media, spilling over into the ASEAN region
5. Strong demand for DPOs to continue in the region

In November 2021, the DPEX Centre reported that dedicated [DPO jobs](#) in Singapore increased by 54% from 2020, with an estimated 3,700 Data Protection-related jobs created in 2021.

A detailed webinar discussion about these Five Key Trends will be held on January 12, 2022. To sign up for the free event and get more information, please visit the Data Protection Excellence (DPEX) Network portal at: <https://www.dpexnetwork.org/events/2022-data-protection-trend-predictions-2022>

- end -

### **About Data Protection Excellence (DPEX) Network**

The Data Protection Excellence (DPEX) Centre is the research and education arm of the DPEX Network, a first of its kind facility in the ASEAN region whose aim is to provide leadership, best practices, training, research and support for all things surrounding data privacy from an operational perspective. This collaboration of partnerships comprises certification bodies, law firms, universities and organisations who provide professional services and technologies relating to data privacy. An ever-growing network, members currently include Straits Interactive, Singapore Management University, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), PECB, IAPP, EXIN and OCEG amongst others. More information about DPEX Network can be found at [www.dpexnetwork.org](http://www.dpexnetwork.org)

### **About Straits Interactive**

Straits Interactive delivers end-to-end governance, risk and compliance solutions that enable trusted business and responsible marketing, especially in the area of data privacy and protection. Recently Data Protection Trustmark (DPTM) certified, we help businesses achieve operational compliance and manage risks through a combination of cloud technology and professional services.

Media Contact

***Straits Interactive/DPEX Network***

Angela Schooling  
Marketing & Communications Director  
Mobile: +65 98222625  
Email: [angela@straitsinteractive.com](mailto:angela@straitsinteractive.com)

**Clearstory International**

Roisin O'Donoghue  
Senior Account Executive  
Telephone: +353 87 7489420  
Email: [roisin@clearstoryinternational.com](mailto:roisin@clearstoryinternational.com)