

Immediate Release

Demand for Data Protection Officers (DPOs) continues to grow amid new regional Data Protection laws and requirements

DPO jobs increase by 54% from 2020, with estimated 3,700 Data Protection-related jobs created in 2021

December 8, 2021, Singapore – The Data Protection Excellence (DPEX) Centre, the learning and research arm of Straits Interactive, today announced a 54% year-on-year increase by companies advertising for the role of Data Protection Officer (DPO) in its annual survey of data protection-related jobs available in Singapore.

An estimated 3,700 data protection-related jobs were created in 2021, amid uncertain COVID-19 conditions, new data protection laws in the region and increasing requirements for the appointment of a DPO.

“The strong demand for data protection expertise will likely continue in the next few years as countries like China, Indonesia and Thailand roll out their new data protection laws, all of which have requirements for a data protection officer or related roles,” said Kevin Shepherdson, CEO, Straits Interactive.

“We therefore expect a shortage for such expertise, aggravated by on-going data and privacy breaches, as well as continuing COVID-19 conditions.”

Now in its sixth year, the survey analysed job vacancies in the month of September relating specifically to the role of a DPO or data protection roles and functions. There were a total of 309 unique job posts advertised in September alone.

Key Findings

- 54% annual increase for specific DPO positions in 2021
- 9 in 10 of the vacancies (93%) were permanent positions despite uncertainty due to COVID-19
- About half of the data protection jobs (48%) were managerial positions and above
- Top three industries hiring data protection expertise: Business Services (including accounting, consulting and legal), Banking & Financial Services, and IT-related companies

Overall, demand for all jobs requiring data protection expertise increased by 26% in 2021 , compared to 106% in the previous year, which was a “knee jerk” response by companies rushing to hire data protection roles. This can be attributed to a high-profile data breach enforcement decision, where a combined fine of S\$1 million was imposed on SingHealth and its data intermediary, IHIS, as well as multiple breaches in the health sector in the period of 2018-2019.

Recommendations

- Organisations should get their DPOs formally trained, especially for organisations undergoing Data Protection Trustmark (DPTM) certification and those with a regional presence
- Individuals should ground themselves either with international certification from the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP), ISO certification (27701) or local certification by Singapore’s Personal Data Protection Commission (Practitioner Certificate in Personal Data Protection)
- DPOs should be familiar with the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which is the basis for many of the new data protection laws being introduced

A webinar about this year’s research will be held on 8 December, 2021. Registration to the event is at <https://go.dpexnetwork.org/8DEC>

More information about the DPEX Centre and the research can be found at www.dpexnetwork.org

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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, IAPP, EXIN and OCEG amongst others. More information about DPEX Network can be found at www.dpexnetwork.org

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.

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