

GDPR and the travel sector: Benign Easter bunny, nightmare on compliance street, or the ultimate game of chance?

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GDPR has been excellent for revealing the “personalities” of companies across the travel trade.

First you have the happy Easter bunnies – those that have prepared well in advance, splashed out on the technological framework necessary and will be sitting pretty next May on the 25th, the implementation deadline. They will stand up to regulatory scrutiny, no problem. And they will also have the competitive edge, in some cases, because GDPR readiness will have been a trigger to look at their technology holistically and to streamline and update it.

Then there are the Eleventh Hour panickers. These companies did start preparing, but things have lagged. They will most likely arrive at the deadline somewhat prepared and have a last minute push.

And then there are the chancers and the ostriches (whichever way you see them)- these companies read the terms of the legislation, and took a gamble, deciding that it would probably all be alright on the night. Some didn't want to do the work; others couldn't afford the change in time. They, effectively, took a decision to go at their own pace, and see how things panned out.

So, with GDPR coming, who gives a damn? Who's ready? And what will happen to companies that aren't anywhere close to being compliant? While some are entirely all

ready, others are entirely unready. Both categories include companies large and small. Fewer than 50% of companies will be ready by next year.

But here's the thing. The vast majority of the governments of countries where compliance is ready, are nowhere near ready either. What government is going to have the resources to police this across the board?

Consider the vastness that is the remit. It is hard to fathom. Of course, it is not just in the travel sector, but across the board – if a company wants to move from insurance company X to insurance company Y and they call up and say I want to have all my “stuff”. All the data that you've ever collected. And I want to see it and I want it to be handed over to your competitor that I'm moving to so that they can make an assessment and we can go from there. Will that company be ready and able to do this? Highly, highly unlikely. And will the Government be able to check all companies in depth? Absolutely not. At least not at first.

So, what will a government, that is itself unprepared and under resourced to examine everyone, do in travel sector? Will it sweep through, fining companies left, right and centre? It has to do something, but what?

My prediction is that the UK Government will pick a large, well-resourced travel sector company, with lots of money and they will come down on them like a tonne of bricks. They will be made an example of. The end game being to frighten lots of smaller companies, who will then become compliant.

While some will come a cropper, most will eventually comply and live to tell the tale. The Easter bunny is coming. Are you feeling lucky?

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Original article can be found here: <https://gdpr.report/news/2017/12/12/gdpr-travel-sector-benign-easter-bunny-nightmare-compliance-street-ultimate-game-chance/>