



## THOMSON REUTERS® DATA PRIVACY ADVISOR

### COVID-19 Data Privacy Global News Coverage

May 22, 2021 – June 4, 2021

The following is a selection of global COVID-19 developments compiled by the Thomson Reuters Data Privacy news team. This news bulletin covers technology developments, cybersecurity, proposed legislation, and other key data privacy updates relating to COVID-19.

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#### Technology Developments

[EU to Step Up Digital Push with Digital Identity Wallet](#) EU (June 3, 2021)

The European Commission will announce plans for a digital identity wallet to allow Europeans to access public and private services, prompted in part by the COVID-19 pandemic which has seen a massive surge in online services. The move also seeks to counter the growing popularity of digital wallets offered by Apple, Alphabet unit Google, Thales, and financial institutions which critics say could pose privacy and data protection concerns.

[New Tech to Detect COVID-19 Violations at Some Abu Dhabi Schools](#) UAE (May 26, 2021)

New technology rolled out in Abu Dhabi will help detect violations of COVID-19 safety measures in some schools. The tech will signal disruptive behaviour or bullying, as well as track compliance to health standards. The technology will be piloted at Al Ain's Jabel Hafeet School for the new academic year in September. The technology will be delivered by a network of advanced IP motion sensors integrated across the school's existing CCTV infrastructure.

#### Cybersecurity

[Italian Data Protection Authority Issues Guidelines on Data Processing Relating to Employees' COVID-19 Vaccinations at the Workplace](#) Italy (June 3, 2021)

The DPA confirmed that employers may not collect, either directly or indirectly (including through healthcare professionals), any personal data of employees participating in the workplace vaccination campaign, including their participation in such campaign, vaccination status and any other information about employees' health conditions.

[The Significance of the Data Privacy Act in the COVID-19 Response](#) Philippines (June 1, 2021)

With the Philippines battling a health crisis for more than a year now, there is a legitimate interest sought to be addressed by the collection of personal information. However, with the pervasiveness of data collection, it can sometimes be a little too cumbersome or an

anxiety-inducing task that prompts us to ask if our privacy is adequately protected. In this case, the role of the Data Privacy Act may be well worth looking into.

[Privacy Commissioners Comment on Vaccine Passports](#) Canada (May 31, 2021)

The Privacy Commissioners released a joint statement relating to certain privacy concerns raised by the development of vaccine passports. Citing a need to incorporate "privacy best practices" in order to achieve protections commensurate with the sensitivity of individuals' personal health information, the Statement serves to remind of the serious privacy issues that should be considered alongside the potentially significant benefits that vaccine passports may ultimately facilitate.

[Healthcare and Cybersecurity: A Critical Pairing for The COVID-19 Vaccine Supply Chain](#) Global (May 26, 2021)

Cyber criminals are well known for taking advantage of any opportunity. The largest vaccine rollout in history is no exception, with hackers now finding ways to target the supply chain. Understanding why the COVID-19 vaccine supply chain being targeted and how to protect against such attacks is vital for IT leaders who understand that healthcare and cybersecurity must now go hand in hand.

### **Proposed Legislation**

[Crow, Kim Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Promote Cybersecurity at the Small Business Administration Employee Monitoring](#) U.S. (May 25, 2021)

Reps. Jason Crow (D-CO) and Young Kim (R-CA) introduced the SBA Cyber Awareness Act, bipartisan legislation that would strengthen the Small Business Administration's (SBA) cybersecurity to handle and report cyber threats that affect small businesses. "The unprecedented demand for COVID-19 relief programs exposed cybersecurity vulnerabilities at the SBA. We must secure our systems so our small business owners can safely utilize SBA's resources as they work to reopen their doors and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic".

### **Other Key Data Privacy Updates**

[App Update Aids Job Record Retrieval](#) Hong Kong (June 1, 2021)

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer has announced that the updated LeaveHomeSafe mobile app lets users store their vaccination and testing records. The newly added Electronic Vaccination & Testing Record function in the LeaveHomeSafe mobile app's version 2.0 allows users to scan and save the QR codes from their paper or electronic vaccination records for easy retrieval. The new function can also save electronic testing records. To protect stored records and personal data privacy, users must pass through the same biometric or password authentication that they use for unlocking their phones when accessing electronic vaccination or testing records in the app. Additionally, the QR code on the vaccination record adopts digital signature technology to ensure that the data it contains is tamper-proof and authentic.

[What Has the Move to Remote Working Meant for Employee Monitoring?](#) UK (May 30, 2021)

Employee monitoring is on the rise. ESG's international 2021 Technology Spending Intentions Survey noted that almost half (48%) of senior IT decision makers questioned had been asked to increase employee monitoring since the start of the pandemic, while GetApp's Employee Monitoring Survey reported that one in four UK SMBs have implemented employee monitoring software in that time. This article discusses how

employees are being monitored, the extent of the monitoring and questions surrounding trust, ethics, and privacy.

[Asking for Proof of Vaccine is not a HIPAA Violation](#) U.S. (May 29, 2021)

Asking a person for proof of vaccination against COVID-19 might feel like an invasion of privacy, but it is not considered a violation against the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and businesses are permitted to ask. HIPAA pertains to healthcare businesses and establishments such as hospitals, doctor's offices, insurance companies, but grocery stores, restaurants, and other businesses do not fall into the same category. This means an establishment verifying or asking a person for proof of their vaccination status is not a privacy violation under HIPAA because a person can share their own information. Most chains that have announced they will lift mask mandates for vaccinated people said they won't be asking for proof of the COVID-19 shot but hope people will be honest.

[The Committee on European Affairs Discussed EU Digital Certificates on COVID-19](#) Croatia (May 29, 2021)

The Committee on European Affairs adopted the Position of the Republic of Croatia on EU digital certificates on COVID-19, formerly known as digital green certificates. The position includes two proposals for regulations aimed at allowing people who have been vaccinated or have a negative COVID-19 test to move freely within the EU. The position of the Republic of Croatia was presented by the State Secretary in the Ministry of the Interior, Terezija Gras, who said that digital certificates would be free, secure and accessible to all, while respecting the obligation to protect personal data.

[Government Completes Public Review of Corona Certificate Rules](#) Norway (May 28, 2021)

The Norwegian government sent out a proposal for public review (høring) regarding the issuance of an official "Corona Certificate." The government noted in the høring document that, in practice, the Corona Certificate may at least indirectly become a tool to promote the exercise of constitutionally protected freedoms, ensuring that limits to those freedoms and limits on the right to privacy are not in force longer than necessary. However, the government also recognized that the use of a Corona Certificate may also infringe on a person's right to privacy.

[Bengaluru Civic Body Faces Flak Over Data Privacy of COVID-19 Patients](#) India (May 26, 2021)

The data records of those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in Bengaluru were out in the public domain for some time, which is a clear violation of IT rules around data privacy and can lead to misuse of the information, experts have said. Free Software Movement of India, a coalition of organizations working on data privacy, flagged that COVID-19 data record was being published by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP's) contractor Xyram Software Solutions (Xyramsoft). Test results and personal data of anyone who has been tested in the capital of Karnataka can be accessed on Xyramsoft site by typing in their 10-digit mobile number.

[We Need Vaccine Passports, But How Should They be Designed?](#) Canada (May 24, 2021)

Canada recently announced that the federal government will create a COVID-19 vaccine passport to allow Canadians to travel internationally again. Privacy campaigners have expressed concerns that a passport system used to check our vaccination status before entering a store during COVID times could form the backbone of a long-lasting system of location-based surveillance. These are legitimate concerns, but research makes clear that choices can be made in the design characteristics of a vaccine passport system and the

rules governing their use to avert them. To do this, several questions need to be addressed including who is permitted to issue vaccination passports, what information should they include and what technological form will they take?

[Odisha Government Launches Website for COVID-19 Test Report](#) India (May 23, 2021)

The Odisha government has launched a website where people who have undergone a COVID-19 test can check whether they have tested positive or negative at home without having to queue up at the test centers to collect them. To ensure privacy, an OTP (one-time password) will be sent to the registered mobile number of the person who was tested.

[Provisional Agreement on Digital COVID-19 Certificate Proposal](#) EU (May 21, 2021)

The European Commission has welcomed the provisional political agreement between the European Parliament and the Council on the Regulation governing the EU Digital COVID Certificate. It will cover vaccination, test and recovery and will be available in a digital and paper-based format, depending on the choice of the recipients, and contain a digitally signed QR code. It will be free of charge, obtained easily and available to persons vaccinated before the EU Digital COVID Certificate Regulation has entered into force. The certificate may also be used by Member States for national purposes if this is provided for in national law. Member States shall refrain from imposing additional travel restrictions on the holders of an EU Digital COVID Certificate unless they are necessary and proportionate to safeguard public health.