

Winding Down

It was a hectic 3 days of a rollercoaster ride delving upon myriad details of the data protection subject. As Sri Ramesh summed up at the end of the event in his synopsis, it was a very productive 3 days. As the curtains were drawn on the event at the fag end of the day, the takeaways were plenty and if the event has succeeded in generating a new curiosity and interest in Data Protection – then the event has achieved a lot. Thanks to technology, many were able to attend the sessions. It seemed like the virtual participation was not a dampener but an enabler. As Sri Sanjay Sahay, IPS, ex ADGP, Karnataka, mentioned – it was a heartening response to a new coming domain of data protection addressing all the nuances and organizing such an event is not an easy job at all. He said that the event is an attempt by FDPPI to bring India up to speed in the complex area of Data protection and has deciphered a large number of crevices in the challenging domain.

Sri Sahay in his breathtaking delivery, deliberated upon the importance of technology and how the challenges of data protection are at the crossroads of technology and law. He said that the complex subject of data protection needs interdisciplinary skills. Sri Sahay reiterated on the importance of data and how it is used as a money spinning means by those who manage it. Interestingly, he said that the concept of privacy by design is easier said than done as not many understand the technology aspect clearly. Policy, Law, Technology and Enforcement form the important factors and enforcement is not adequate in spite of the fact that an IT act is in place. Sri Sahay was candid and came down hard on the IT behemoths who are ruling the roost and no amount of political or government intervention is able to control them. At the end of Sri Sanjay Sahay's session, Sri Naavi said that the session has left the audience awestruck, while Sri Ramesh exclaimed that the session left him shellshocked.

Sri Rakshit Tandon, a renowned cyber security evangelist and trainer, said that the Healthcare, Fintech and Edtech are critical sectors as large volume of sensitive personal information is handled by them. As a part of his keynote address, on the topic of Privacy and Social media, he narrated about a ploy by con artists who steal information from vulnerable and unsuspecting users – A user calls a helpline number of a bank, but there is no response, and soon after, there is an incoming call from a con artist masquerading as a bank agent. The agent claims to represent the bank and seeks account details and information of credit card etc ... from the hapless unsuspecting victim. He stressed on the importance of protecting children from cyber crimes by building awareness in them. In another panel discussion, panelists emphasized on how cyber security, data protection and privacy apply to smart cities and payment companies. The panelists particularly expressed concern about the vulnerable citizens in the rural areas where the awareness is absent about cyber security and rights over their personal data.

In his presentation on Data Valuation, Sri Naavi mentioned as to how the awareness of the value of data held by a company is important to set the budget aside for tools that are needed to protect the data. The valuation of data is needed as it will be used to justify the support for DPO roles. Just as the share price of an organization depends on assets held amongst many other factors, the data held by the company too has to be viewed as a similar asset. Data value should be considered in the same manner as how the intangible assets like IP rights, Trademark rights and goodwill etc... are looked at. Sri Naavi expressed his opinion that customers should give consent for certain purposes beyond the primary, so that certain value added services can be turned on for themselves. Later in the day, as part of a panel on the same topic, the panelist cited an example of how a food delivery company can use the customer data collected to provide advisory services to hoteliers who want to setup business in a

particular area. The customer dietary preferences can be shared with the hoteliers for focused services. But this is beyond the purpose for which the data was collected initially.

Earlier, as part of a panel discussion on the impact of privacy upon innovation, the panelists strongly believed that privacy has to be a factor of consideration at every step of development. Innovation will bring its own solutions to privacy challenges. The risks posed by medical implants were discussed. These implants being IOT devices can share vital parameters pertaining to the patient. Adequate protection techniques including encryption and geofencing need to be implemented. The risks posed by GPS enabled devices which share location information were also discussed. Sri Ramesh presented a very informative session on PDPSI framework. He highlighted the unifying property of the framework that addresses the requirements of different standards, regulations and frameworks like ISO, GDPR, CCPA, HIPAA, NIST etc.. He shared information about how FDPPI as an accredited certification body is geared up to enable compliance in relevant organizations.

IDPS 2021 was a unique event, on an emerging topic. Such events are difficult to organize and meet the intended objectives. It can be safely said that FDPPI has taken the lead position in thought leadership in the challenging domain of data protection. With the PDPB on the verge of being tabled in parliament, this event was a timely one and there can be no doubt that many practitioners, enthusiasts, and other interested parties would have benefitted from it. The ecosystem looks forward to IDPS 2022 with a renewed curiosity and lots of positive hope.

Thanks,

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Narasinga Rao