

## **The Government's Act on Upholding the Data Privacy Act During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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### **Abstract**

Technology is rapidly evolving, and the internet is now essential in most people's daily needs. The increased use of cyberspace and data creation has increased cybercriminal activities. In the Philippines, the internet has been exceedingly used by the youth in finding data and gaining general knowledge, and Filipinos have also been found to be susceptible to cyberattacks. In order to maintain data privacy, Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act, was implemented to keep up with the fast development of technology that became a hindrance in educating people, which may put national security at risk. The risk of data breaches and leaks have always been a concern in the Philippines, and this risk heightens with the prevalence of the pandemic. Contact tracing has become an essential to the government during the pandemic, and it is used to protect the data privacy of the Filipinos. However, it was put at stake after the ECOP proposed the suspension of the data privacy act by disclosing the names of infected people in hopes of close contacts to turn themselves in. It was concluded that cybercrimes have already been prevalent even before the pandemic. To help solve this issue, it is recommended that contact tracing must ensure that data privacy is always upheld. People who are assigned in handling and sorting data should be aware of the DPA and what

guidelines they must take note of to ensure the protection of data privacy. Contact tracing apps must be developed using the privacy-by-design approach and must implement a proper consent mechanism. Finally, the data privacy act must be always upheld and should not be suspended for the sole reason of contact tracing.

### **Keywords**

Technology, Internet, Data Privacy Act, data breach, national security, COVID-19 pandemic, contact tracing, cybercrime

### **Biographies**

**Dr. Eric Blancaflor** is an Associate Professor of Mapua University, Philippines. He earned B.S. in Electronics Engineering from Mapua University, Master's in Engineering major in Computer Engineering in the University of the City of Manila and Doctor of Technology in Technological University of the Philippines. He has published conference papers related to IT systems, network design and security.

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