EDPB Public Consultation - Help make GDPR compliance easy for organisations: what templates would be helpful for you?

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Our interdisciplinary research on online privacy compliance shows that software developers and website owners (collectively referred to as developers) struggle to interpret and apply privacy requirements, whether sourced online, generated by Large Language Models (LLMs), embedded in legislative texts, or provided by legal experts. These include:

1. Developers see **privacy compliance as a constraint on how they build systems**. We recommend providing concrete, implementable scenario-based guidance (e.g., analytics tracking, consent for Google Analytics, account creation, third-party sharing) early in the development process. [1,4]

2. Developers often **lack awareness of privacy** issues in their projects. Templates should inform them of legal issues related to their use-case and how to remediate them. [1,2,7,8]

3. Developers struggle to **map legal requirements** to actionable design and implementation software because technical specificity is often missing. Templates should provide information that considers the legal knowledge and technical requirements of the target group. [1-5,7]

4. Developers often struggle to **demonstrate that privacy requirements have been met in their implementation**. Clear, technically grounded guidance on how to provide such evidence should be offered, along with examples covering specific use-cases. [1]

5. Developers are often **unsure whether the privacy information sourced applies** to their use-case. Templates should provide good/bad examples, exceptions, map legal basis per purpose, and use FAQ. [2-6]

6. **Legal language** is challenging to understand for developers. We suggest short, clear explanations for unfamiliar or legalistic concepts, especially those requiring legal reasoning (e.g., legitimate interest three-tier test; necessity). [1,2,4,6]

7. **Legal texts are seen as lengthy and hard to use**. Templates should be concise and layered. [2,3]

8. Developers feel unable to manage privacy on their own and **struggle to find trustworthy legal sources**. Templates should provide links to trusted sources, e.g., guidelines, similar cases, and laws. [3,5-7]

9. Developers **favor LLMs** over other online sources for privacy information (e.g., forums). Templates should caution developers to critically assess the quality and reliability of information given by showing common misinformation and pitfalls. [3]

[1] Horstmann et al., "Those things are written by lawyers, and programmers are reading that." Mapping the Communication Gap Between Software Developers and Privacy Experts. In Proceedings of the Privacy Enhancing Technologies Symposium 2024 [pdf]
[2] Horstmann et al., "Sorry for Bugging you so much." Exploring Developers' Behavior Towards Privacy-Compliant Implementation. Proceedings of the 2025 IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy (SP) [pdf]
[3] Horstmann et al., "I need to learn better searching tactics for privacy policy laws." Investigating Software Developers' Behavior When Using Sources on Privacy Issues. To Appear: IEEE/ACM 48th International Conference on Software Engineering (ICSE26) [pdf]
[4] Tahaei et al., Understanding Privacy-Related Questions on Stack Overflow. In Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems [pdf]
[5] Tahaei et al., Understanding Privacy-Related Advice on Stack Overflow. In Proceedings of the Privacy Enhancing Technologies Symposium 2024 [pdf]
[6] Kyi, Lin, et al. "Turning to Online Forums for Legal Information: A Case Study of GDPR's Legitimate Interests." *Annual Privacy Forum*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2025 [pdf]
[7] Stöver, Alina, et al. "How website owners face privacy issues: Thematic analysis of responses from a covert notification study reveals diverse circumstances and challenges." *Proceedings on Privacy Enhancing Technologies* (2023). [pdf]
[8] Utz, Christine, et al. "Privacy Rarely Considered: Exploring Considerations in the Adoption of Third-Party Services by Websites." *Proceedings on Privacy Enhancing Technologies* (2023) [pdf]