



January 28th is Data Privacy Day, an annual international celebration designed to promote awareness about privacy and education about best privacy practices. The West Virginia Executive Branch Privacy Office and the Privacy Management Team support Data Privacy Day and ask that you review the following tip (and adhere to it) to show your support as well.

Clean Desk, Clean Computer Resolution!

At the beginning of each new year, many of us make lots of “resolutions” and we keep some of them (maybe)! The Privacy Office would like for you to add two “resolutions” to your list and these are super easy resolutions to stick to. Combined, these will take just a half hour a month, at most. Before you say “I don’t have a half hour to spare” read on.

Carve out just 15 minutes a month to organize your desk and files and make sure all personally identifiable information (PII) is secured. Sometimes we forget that names, home addresses and dates of birth are PII and can be used to steal identity. Many times PII just gets lost; by taking a few minutes to locate and secure paper records you can help prevent security incidents.

If you have paper records containing PII that you don’t need, such as photocopies or drafts, shred them! If you have paper records that need to be retained, make sure they are properly secured in accordance with your Department’s policies. If you aren’t familiar with these policies, reach out to your manager or Privacy Officer for more information.

Spending 15 minutes a month to clean up your computer files is really important too. Move all those emails and files from your inbox, sent folder, and “my documents” folder to more appropriate files on your Department’s servers.

Also, confirm that you don’t have any Sensitive PII (Social Security numbers, health and medical data, financial account numbers, etc.) on your local hard drive. Sensitive PII should only be stored, long term, on Department servers.

So there you go – 15 minutes for your desk/paper files and 15 minutes for your computer files and you will have taken simple, yet powerful steps to protect the PII that you are charged with safeguarding. You can do it!

Note: Your agency/bureau/department/division may have specific requirements – always check your policies and procedures. If you have questions, contact your Privacy Officer.