

Beyond opt-in emails: Why a unified platform is key to PoPIA compliance

 By [Greg Gatherer](#)

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If the state of our inboxes are anything to go by, most companies spent the last week of June in a desperate scramble to be compliant with South Africa's Protection of Personal Information Act (PoPIA). But now that you've told everyone on your newsletter mailing list that they can unsubscribe if they want to, it's back to business as usual right?



Source: www.pexels.com

Not so fast. PoPIA requires ongoing compliance, especially when it comes to the secure maintenance of customer data. More specifically, the act grants individuals nine rights pertaining to the processing of their data. This includes the right to be notified when and how data is being collected, the right to access said data, and the right to correct or delete information. Additionally, it prescribes eight conditions for the lawful processing of data.

These are:

- Accountability;
- Processing limitation;
- Purpose specification;
- Further processing limitation;
- Information quality;
- Openness;
- Security safeguards; and
- Data subject participation.

Meeting these requirements and respecting those rights can be difficult within the frameworks traditionally used within organisations. A unified platform, such a digital experience platform (DXP) can make it a great deal simpler.

The power of unity

In many organisations, customer data sits within disparate silos, controlled by different departments. So, for example, an organisation's billing department might have different information about a specific customer than the marketing department has. That siloed data can also make it difficult to understand when a single person interacts with the organisation across multiple devices and platforms.



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That not only makes it more difficult to provide a good, consistent customer experience, it also makes compliance a major challenge. A DXP can help address both of these issues.

Put simply, a DXP is a digital integration platform, designed to simplify the digital transformation process for organisations and improve the overall customer experience. The platform allows businesses to digitise business operations, deliver a consistent customer experience across all channels, and gather insights on customers. And most importantly, unifying customer profiles irrespective of the channel that they are engaging through.

Ultimately, the goal of a DXP is to help companies provide the best possible digital experience to its customers, employees, partners and other stakeholders managing the user profiles and the data associated with it in compliance with PoPIA and GDPR. It does this by simplifying the integration of digital tools, enhancing self-service capabilities, and improving collaboration and knowledge sharing.

These same characteristics make compliance much simpler because they allow the organisations to have a unified view over their customers' data and how it's being used. A good DXP should also include features such as data export, data erasure, and user permissions combined with flexible architecture. This will enable the organisation to adapt business-critical software to the evolving needs of its protection strategy.

So, while no single piece of software can offer up a checklist that ensures total PoPIA compliance, the right DXP can take you a long way towards compliance.

Security matters too

Additionally, a good DXP will also make your customer data management more secure. It should, for example, support HTTPS for all communication between browser and mobile clients and its servers as well as utilising strong encryption algorithms for a variety of features, including passwords.

Additionally, it should provide a central platform for determining enterprise content policy, including who can edit and publish content, files, communities and applications.

All of these factors, and others not only mean your organisation is less in danger of falling victim to a data breach, but is also more likely to be in a strong position to manage a breach when it does occur. In Europe, many companies fell foul of GDPR rulings because they failed to put these kinds of protections in place. The same will likely happen with PoPIA in South Africa.



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Beyond unsubscribe

It's clear then that PoPIA compliance isn't simply about sending a once-and-done email to your customers telling them they can unsubscribe from your newsletter database. Far more important is ensuring that your customers' data is protected on an ongoing basis. While failing to do so within the bounds of PoPIA could cost your organisation dearly, the tools that make compliance easier could also result in a greatly improved experience for your customers. That in turn comes with multiple benefits, including loyalty and increased spend, resulting in a positive impact on your bottom line.

ABOUT GREG GATHERER

Greg Gatherer is an account manager at Liferay Africa.

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