

# Perceptions of Data Subject Consent

**Stephen Breen**

## **Aim:**

Explore the factors that influence successful gathering of data subject consent in the context of article 7 of the GDPR.

## **Research methods:**

Three surveys were conducted, with data subjects, companies who gather consent and GDPR consultants. The data subject survey was designed to determine the experience of giving consent and in how far giving consent was in compliance with the GDPR. Interviews with companies were conducted online with a number of companies from sectors including cyber security, AdTech and a professional body for film and broadcast. Case studies are being developed as part of my PhD research from which this research is being taken.

## **Current findings:**

Data from three surveys and interviews with companies, suggests that the experience a data subject has consenting to their personal data to be processed is unsatisfactory and often invalid due to lack of information why processing is necessary. Many data subjects report consenting due to lack of knowledge and wanting to access a service. The data also shows that there is a perception among some companies that the experience of data subjects is positive and understand the reasons for processing their personal data. There is clearly a divergence in perception, understanding this may point to a method of auditing consent that is more sympathetic to the perspective of data subjects.

## **Anticipated impact:**

The model for gathering consent by companies is not fit for purpose. This research highlights the dichotomy that exists between data subjects and businesses when it comes to giving and gathering consent. Understanding data subject perceptions in relation to giving consent provides a clear point of departure for developing an audit model that is data subject oriented.