



DUALE, OVIA &
ALEX-ADEDIPE

A graphic of a light blue document with a white user icon at the top. Below the icon are two input fields: 'Username' with a person icon and 'Password' with a lock icon. A purple 'LOGIN' button is positioned below the fields, and a 'Remember me?' checkbox is at the bottom.

Technical Measures for the Protection of Personal Data in Nigeria

Introduction

Protecting personal data has become an essential requirement in today's digital age, given the rapid growth of data-driven industries. With increasing concerns over privacy breaches, data protection laws and regulations have emerged worldwide. The Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 (“**NDPA**”)¹ and the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (“**NDPR**”) requires organizations that collect, use, disseminate, transmit, or store personal data to implement robust technical measures to ensure the security, integrity, and confidentiality of personal data in their possession or under their control. They are also required to secure personal data against all foreseeable hazards and breaches such as theft, cyberattack, viral attack, manipulations of any kind, damage by rain, fire or exposure to other natural elements.²

In today's #TMTThursday we examine some of the technical strategies that are key to safeguarding personal data in Nigeria.

¹Section 39(1) NDPA

²Paragraph 2.1 (1) (d) NDPR

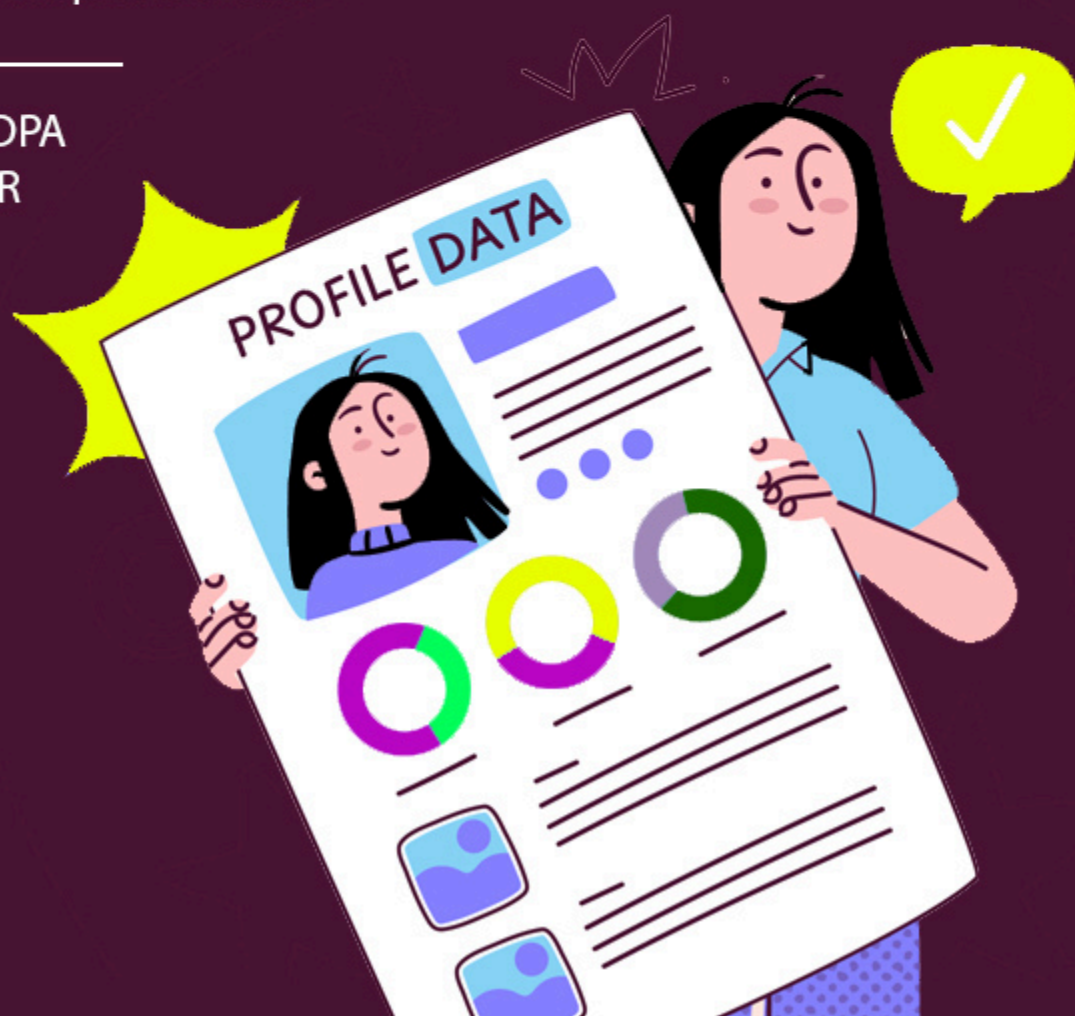


Technical Measures for Data Protection

1. **Encryption:** Encryption transforms personal data into unreadable code, preventing unauthorized access. Encryption should be implemented across all stages of data processing to mitigate risks associated with data breaches. The NDPA encourages encryption,³ as it aligns with global data protection best practices by helping companies fulfill requirements for the confidentiality and integrity of personal data.
2. **Access Control:** Access control is an essential technical measure for protecting personal data, focusing on managing who can view, edit, or delete data within or outside an organization. Access control includes role-based access control which restricts access based on user roles and ensures that only authorized individuals have access to sensitive or personal data. Nigerian businesses and institutions are encouraged to implement these controls to protect data from unauthorized access.⁴ Role-based access control ensures that employees, contractors, and service providers can only access data that is relevant to their responsibilities.

³ Section 39(2) (b) NDPA

⁴ Paragraph 2.6 NDPR



- 3. Data Anonymization and Pseudonymization⁵:** Data anonymization and pseudonymization are techniques used to obscure personal data within a dataset, reducing the risk of individual identification. Anonymization permanently removes all identifying characteristics, making data subjects unidentifiable, while pseudonymization replaces identifiable data with pseudonyms or tokens. In Nigeria, pseudonymization is frequently used in sectors such as telecommunications, banking, and healthcare, where organizations must balance the need for data analysis with privacy concerns. For instance, banks can utilize pseudonymization for customers' financial data, allowing analysis of spending habits without revealing personal data. Anonymization, while more permanent, is also valuable in Nigeria for research and statistics purposes, enabling secure data sharing without compromising individual privacy.

Conclusion

Technical measures are essential for protecting personal data in Nigeria, where increasing digitalization presents both opportunities and challenges in privacy protection. Implementing encryption, access control, and anonymization allows Nigerian organizations to strengthen their data protection frameworks and comply with the NDPA and NDPR. As the digital landscape in Nigeria continues to evolve, it is crucial that organizations invest in and update these technical measures to protect personal data against evolving security threats. Adopting these measures not only ensures compliance with NDPA and NDPR but also builds trust with customers, enhances the integrity of business operations, and fosters a more secure digital environment across Nigeria.

⁵Section 39 (2) (a) NDPA