



AESC Review Note 8

Personal Data Protection – Highlights of the Findings and Recommendations from the Privacy Commissioner’s Report

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Introduction: The Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (PCPD) has published the report on "Comparison of Privacy Settings of Social Media" in 2022. It found that social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram would collect a range of personal data from 12 to 19 types (Ming Pao, 2022). The privacy risks may

include the abuse of personal data, data scraping or data leakage. Moreover, the publicly available personal data would contribute to cyberbullying, phishing and other illegal activities. It thus leads to property loss, physical damage and psychological harm to the victims. Therefore, social media users are advised to protect personal information via default settings, end-to-end encryption and two-factor authentication (PCDC, 2022a).

Table 1. Types of Personal Data Collected by Most Social Media

Category	Types of Information
Basic Information	Name*, Birth Date*, Birth Year, Gender, Photo, Interest
Contact Information	Mobile phone number*, Email address*
Work and Education	Working Company, Working Position, Working Period, Study College, Study Major, Study Period
Family Status	Family Member, Relationship Status
Living Place	Current Location, Living City, Hometown

*Information required for registration by most of the social media

Table 2. Types of Personal Data Collected by SEE Apps and Interviews

Category	Types of Information
Basic Information	Name, Gender
Contact Information	Mobile Phone Number, Email Address*
Work and Education	Employment Types, Education Level
Family Status	Family Member, Family Structure, Income Range
Living Place	Property Types, Property Sizes, Number of Rooms

*Information required for registration by SEE apps

Table 3. Recommendation to protect personal information; Source: (PCDC, 2022b).

Category	Recommendation
Account Registration	Read the privacy policy of social media carefully, open an email account dedicated to social media and only provide the required personal data.
Default settings	Check the default settings on security to opt for the most privacy-protecting setting and reduce the disclosure of personal information.
Location tracking	If you do not need the location tracking function, consider turning off the function to avoid collecting location data via social media.
Privacy Options	Pay attention to the privacy options of content posted and select the appropriate settings before publishing the content.
End-to-end Encryption	Pay attention to whether it provides end-to-end encryption forms of transmission to strengthen the confidentiality of transmitted data.
Two-factor authentication	Use strong passwords and enable two-factor authentication for social media to strengthen account security.
Credit card transaction	Reduce the risk of credit card data leakage by avoiding transactions on social media platforms over public Wi-Fi or unsecured Wi-Fi connections
Parental Control	Parents may consider enabling parental controls to monitor their children's use of social media and remind them of personal data sharing consequences.

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