

Is your school PoPIA compliant?

As schools and other tertiary institutions require a vast amount of personal information concerning their teachers, students, as well as students' parents, they are one of the industries that will feel the impact of Protection of Personal Information Act the most.



Photo by Alessandro Oliverio from [Pexels](#)

In terms of the data protection laws, all private and public bodies processing personal information, are required to have implemented policies and procedures by 1 July 2021 in order to be compliant.

More concerning is that many of these institutions have heaps of old computer equipment lying in their storerooms. This equipment holds huge amounts of data, not only on the pupils, but on parents and teachers as well. Reckless disposal of electronics is a huge source of illicit information and it often puts schools at risk.

Xperien ITAD specialist Bridgette Vermaak warns schools to comply by ensuring that the data on all their retired electronics is erased or destroyed according to the PoPIA regulations. "Deleting files is not sufficient. Data erasure and IT asset disposal has legislative requirements, compliance to PoPIA, the National Environmental Waste Management Act 2008 (Nemwa 2008), the Consumer Protection Act 68 of 2008 (CPA) and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)."

According to legislation, schools and other tertiary institutions are required to manage the complete destruction of all data when IT assets reach end-of-life. PoPIA requires them to practice due diligence and ensure their storerooms go through the expected data erasure techniques essential to protect company data.

Schools that manage IT asset disposition internally continue to struggle with data security and proper environmental recycling. Efficient IT infrastructure life cycle management and secure IT asset disposition (ITAD) can help them maximise value at every stage of their technology investment.

Effective environmental ITAD services have become not just a luxury, but a legal requirement. It's crucial to find a professional ITAD provider that can offer data sanitisation and destruction services to protect the data. If decommissioning and data destruction is done correctly, their reputation is safe, the budget receives a much-needed boost and the leaders have peace of mind.

Value recovery is a crucial part of the process, schools need to receive fair market value for end-of-life and redundant IT equipment. Professional ITAD service providers normally offer to purchase these assets, this includes the collection, data erasure and reporting.

More importantly, most of these institutions are also missing out on the opportunity to get money back for their used IT equipment.

Schools also need to implement a data protection programme that aims at helping pupils understand their responsibilities. Children must understand the implications of unauthorised publishing of personal information and images of third parties, including all social media platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook and Instagram. It could cause serious harm to the school, its stakeholders and its learners.

"Our offer to schools and tertiary institutions is the safe collection of redundant equipment, data erasure and reporting so that they can dispose of their IT equipment knowing that they have complied with relevant legislation and have received the best value for your redundant IT equipment," she concludes.

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