



THE PRIVACY
COMPLIANCE HUB

CASE STUDY: PEERSTREAM



PEERSTREAM ENSURES THE PROCESSING OF MILLIONS OF USER DATA SETS IS GDPR-COMPLIANT

- Peerstream develops technology for multimedia streaming and communications
- Popular legacy products with disparate user data required a comprehensive approach
- The Privacy Compliance Hub was essential in identifying what compliance truly looked like

"...the Hub really had the answers, powerful information, pre-made templates, a lot of structure to put us on the right track and to jump-start us into making a fuller compliance archive"

Adam Zalko
Peerstream's VP
of engineering

What does Peerstream do?

Peerstream is a US-based voice and video communications company pioneering secure blockchain technologies. It all began with Paltalk, a video group chat service, back in the late 1990s. By 2014, the company had also acquired Tinychat and Camfrog - online video chat models with different purposes and users - and owned an online dating portal, FirstMet.



THE PRIVACY
COMPLIANCE HUB

"We were self-sufficient pretty quickly; the framework gave us peace of mind"

The challenge

Across those four core products, Peerstream's user base exceeded more than 100 million users, mostly in the US and Europe. "For us, the big concern when GDPR was announced in 2016 was that we had this huge number of users and held a lot of different information about those users," says Adam Zalko, Peerstream's VP of engineering. "GDPR was this big new thing, so we wanted to understand what we could and couldn't do with that data. We wanted to be fair to our users about their privacy, while at the same time try to find a balance with how we run our business. That was the big challenge for us. Plus, these products were getting on for 20 years old. There's a lot of history, a lot of data, and a lot of technology which had been unchanged in a decade. It was almost a rediscovery journey of ourselves at the time."

Being a team of technologists, Peerstream's top team has always kept abreast of relevant developments. They started looking into the implications at least a year before the new regulations took effect. Looking at the very large fines on the board for non-compliance, "It was too scary to wait until the last minute for this, we needed to be as ready as possible."

Choosing the Privacy Compliance Hub

The internet was the first place they looked, trying to discover what other companies were doing about the forthcoming rules and what tools might be available. At the time, there wasn't much to be found. Initial contact with a set of lawyers in the UK yielded invaluable advice, which set Peerstream on the right course.

But lawyers are expensive, can't be there to guide you all the time, and there was so much to do and so much documentation to draft. "A big task like this, which was not



THE PRIVACY COMPLIANCE HUB

going to be revenue-generating, which wouldn't technically improve our product, was going to absorb a lot of time - time which might mean missing out on more profitable things we could be doing. So, finding a partner to take the time and uncertainty out of it was really important. Thankfully, one of our team was introduced to Karima at the Hub."

The result

The introduction happened at just the right time: early 2018, with only a handful of months until the regulations went live. "Something we thought we were pretty ahead of turned into a bit of a scramble," said Adam. "But the Hub really had the answers, powerful information, pre-made templates, a lot of structure to put us on the right track and to jump-start us into making a fuller compliance archive. We were self-sufficient pretty quickly; the framework gave us peace of mind and the ability to compare what we were doing with what the guidelines really required," said Adam. "And it was actually affordable for a company of our size."

The biggest thing that happened in that year is that Peerstream sold its dating app, FirstMet. And GDPR was a high-level priority for the buyers. "Understandably, the new owners needed to be reassured that the product would withstand real scrutiny over compliance. The work we did through the Hub gave the company and their lawyers confidence in their purchase. Going forward, I've seen a good mindset develop here at Peerstream: GDPR and privacy have become really important factors in how we look at new products and acquisitions."

THE PRIVACY COMPLIANCE HUB

We believe that to protect personal information you need to build and maintain a culture of continuous compliance.

We enable our clients to achieve this by helping their staff understand privacy; care about privacy; and do their bit to help with privacy.

We provide one easy to use platform containing a comprehensive data protection compliance programme. It includes training, information, templates and reporting

