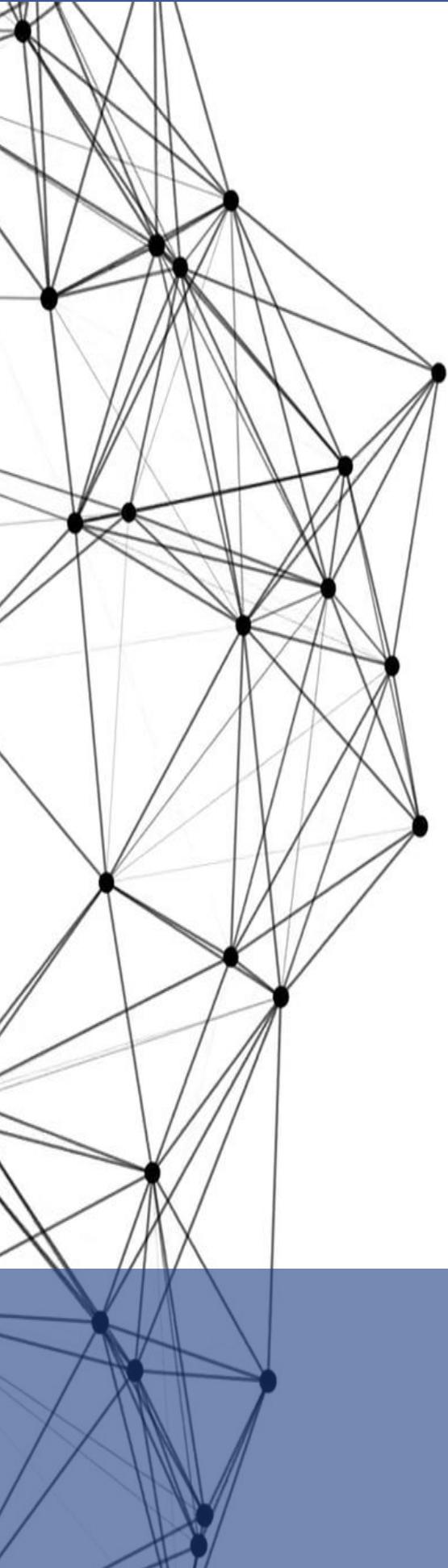


APR 2020



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govt has said privacy should not be a concern because data would be anonymised.

JAPAN9DRAFT STANDARDS FOR GOVERNMENT SECURITY EVALUATION SYSTEM OPEN FOR COMMENTS

JAPAN HAS RELEASED 5 DRAFT STANDARDS FOR THE SECURITY EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (ISMAP), WHICH ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS UNTIL 26 APR 2020. ISMAP IS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE CABINET SECRETARIAT, THE MIC, AND THE METI, AND WAS ESTABLISHED FOLLOWING GOVT POLICIES AND STUDY GROUPS REGARDING THE USE OF CLOUD SERVICES IN GOVT INFORMATION SYSTEMS.

Draft IoT Security and Safety Framework Open for Comments

METI has released the IoT Security and Safety Framework (Draft), which summarises the concept of ensuring the reliability of the connection between physical space and cyber space for IoT devices in "Society 5.0" and "Connected Industries". They are accepting comments in Japanese until 31 May 2020.

Japan Govt Asks Tech Firms for User Data to Combat COVID-19

The national govt requested that major mobile carriers and tech firms voluntarily hand over data on users' locations and search data to help stop the spread of COVID-19. The data would be used to create a better picture of people's movements by using big data and help with early identification of potential infection clusters. The

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APF Calls Bill to Enable CLOUD Act Flawed due to Dislike for Provisions

The Australian Privacy Foundation (APF) has made a submission to the review of the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (International Production Orders) Bill 2020 and calls it an obfuscation of accountability through inadequate transparency, especially with the reliance on a depleted Commonwealth Ombudsman to provide oversight. The APF says the bill is an erosion of privacy protection and that there is a lack of “any substantive information justifying the need for amendment”. The APF calls for the reconsideration of the bill as the current safeguards are far too weak and porous.

- On the other hand, the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI) is supportive of the bill as the new powers would help with international cooperation in pursuing law enforcement prosecutions. The ACLEI called current arrangements for cross jurisdictional access to information consuming and slow, incurring many delays. The ACLEI writes that access to the information stored by Facebook, Hotmail, WhatsApp and Google is more relevant and valuable than ever in pursuing investigations.
- The Commonwealth Ombudsman is asking for an increase in funding to hire more staff if the office is going to perform oversight of the Telecom Legislation Amendment (International Production Orders) Bill 2020. The Ombudsman would also have the responsibility of inspecting the records of the Australian Designated Authority.

Govt Decides to Deploy COVID-19 App

The govt has made the Coronavirus Australia app available on the Apple App Store and Google Play and opened up a new WhatsApp [channel](#) (developed by the DTA, Turn.io and Atlassian) to provide COVID-19 information and advice that is trustworthy and reliable. The app will not be used for proactive contact tracing as what is being done in Singapore. It is a communications channel between the govt and Australian citizens – and a step up from sending people SMS messages to notify the public of developments with the COVID-19 response and inform the public about rules on social distancing, washing hands and staying at home if sick.

- The govt is pouring AUD669m (USD417m) for Medicare subsidised telehealth services so that anyone who is self-isolating can access healthcare over the phone or via video conferencing, including consultations with GPs, specialists and other health professionals.
- The police in Western Australia have started using drones to enforce COVID-19 quarantine restrictions.

OAIC Convenes National COVID-19 Privacy Team

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) has put a team together that will work with the states and territories to make sure that the govt’s response to the pandemic, such as contact tracing, is not thwarted by privacy laws and that all measures taken are proportionate and time limited. Privacy laws in Australia permit the exchange of critical information and the handling of personal information in times of crisis, but require that such information is handled in a way that is necessary and reasonable.

- There is also a [National](#) COVID-19 Coordination Commission, and the ACCC has established an internal COVID-19 [Taskforce](#) that will communicate with businesses to inform them of their obligations with regards to cancellations, refunds and service suspension.

 **Impact Analysis:** If the COVID-19 situation worsens in Australia, the govt might soon be grappling with the privacy dilemma of preserving privacy while delivering working track and trace capabilities. What Australia implements will have to be something that Australian society understands and accepts.

APF Signs on to Joint COVID-19 Tracking Statement

The joint statement with many other human rights and civil society organisations around the world warns that govts should adhere to human rights laws when deploying digital surveillance to do

contact tracing. The use of mobile phone location data can, if used incorrectly, actually harm the effectiveness of a COVID-19 public health response and discriminate against already marginalised communities. The global statement sets out conditions for govts to follow including incorporating accountability protections and safeguards against abuse, further noting that the expansion of surveillance powers should be time bound and the increased collection of data be used only for a COVID 19 response.

ACCC [Gives](#) Interim Authorisation to NBN Co to Form Special Working Group (SWG)

The NBN Co will work together with the five biggest retail service providers (Telstra, Optus, Vodafone Hutchison, TPG, Vocus) and Aussie Broadband to coordinate the surge in network demand due to Australians working from home during the COVID-19 crisis. In those geographic areas where services are impacted due to data congestion, members of the working group can share network resources to address the bottleneck. The working group is also working on an industry approach to support small businesses and vulnerable customers. The ACCC is authorising businesses in a number of sectors – supermarkets, energy suppliers – to share information, coordinate their responses and provide relief, which in other times might not be possible due to anti-competition concerns. The ACCC is welcoming feedback on the interim [authorisation](#) until 24 Apr.

- NBN data traffic has gone up recently by 70% during the business hours while there has been a 50% rise in mobile call volumes on some routes, negatively impacting 3–4% of calls. Retailers are increasing plan allowances or doing away with excess charges to help their customers adjust.
- The NBN Co is [starting](#) the weekly Australian Broadband Data Demand report. It shows that since the last week of Feb the peak download throughput recorded each week in the evening busy hours has increased by 25% to 13.8Tbps.

Senate Fintech Committee to [Look](#) at Response to COVID-19 Outbreak

The Committee has said it will accept new submissions on how the fintech and regtech sectors will be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It welcomes views on what support is needed and what solutions could be delivered by the govt and the private sector. The majority of submissions in the past looked at the Consumer Data Right (CDR) and how that could help emerging financial players compete with the big four banks in Australia.

Communications Alliance [Consulting](#) on Combating Scam Calls Industry Code

The Code is an attempt to reduce scam calls which annoy and defraud consumers, particular in these uncertain times of the COVID-19 pandemic, where consumers are being hawked false cures and fake bailouts. The Code develops technical responses to reduce scam calls by setting out a process for identifying, tracing, blocking and disrupting scam calls through better information sharing between carriage service providers. Not only is the industry collaborating amongst themselves but also working closer with the ACMA to stop the harm caused by scam calls. Feedback is welcome until 8 May.

Mobile Gateway to Access My Health Record System [Reopens](#)

There are four mobile apps available through app stores or through MyGov which now connect to the My Health Record system through a Mobile Gateway. 22.7 million Australians have a My Health Record and these records contain 1.8 billion documents. The legal agreement behind the Mobile Gateway binds app operators to explicitly prohibit them from making a copy of system data and using data for any other secondary purpose. Any servers and infrastructure used to connect to the system have to be located within Australia. To connect to the Mobile Gateway, one has to visit the ADHA (Australian Digital Health Agency) Developer [Centre](#).

- The ADHA is planning to roll out access to electronic prescriptions by the end-Apr via a unique QR barcode token sent thru an app, SMS, or email to the patient.

Standards Australia [Publishes](#) AI Paper

In the [report](#) “An artificial Intelligence Standards Roadmap: Making Australia’s Voice Heard” Standards Australia underscores the importance of the country participating in the global AI conversation. Australia might make a contribution by developing strengths in how to create AI systems in a responsible way, with a good governance framework consistent with Australian standards. Australia could also leverage AI in natural resources management. The country is trying to find an AI niche that it can export and also use as an inducement to get big tech companies to locate AI R&D in country. Other recommendations in the report include streamlining requirements in areas such as privacy risk management, developing standards that take into account diversity, inclusion, fairness, and social trust, and growing Australia's AI capacity and workforce.

Netflix [Cutting](#) Video Streaming Bitrate in Australia

It has taken this step to limit the network load from its service as telecom networks across the country cope with the surge in demand due to more people staying put at home in response to COVID-19. Netflix has engineered a way to reduce traffic by 25% without interfering with video quality. It has taken similar measures in Europe. Streaming platforms in Australia have been asked by the govt to take steps to reduce their network traffic to help the telcos address network congestion.

ASD Launches Cyber Offense [Against](#) Foreign Cyber Criminals and COVID-19 Scammers

The Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) and the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) are working with Google and Microsoft to take down malicious websites spamming Australians with COVID-19 themed scams and phishing activity. The ACSC has, between 10 Mar and 26 Mar, received 45 cybercrime reports from individuals and businesses related to COVID-19 scams designed to steal money and data from Australians.

TC260 [Seeks](#) Public Feedback on Guidelines for Personal Information Protection on Mobile Apps

To stress the importance of personal information protection and assist app and mini-program operators to better understand common compliance issues, the National Information Security Standardisation Technical Committee of China (TC260) has prepared a set of implementation [guidelines](#) that centre around data privacy policies, regulations and standards to promote knowledge on personal information protection.

- Compliance issues covered in the Guidelines include collection of information irrelevant to the service provided, mandating bundle authorizations, failure to state explicitly the rules governing the collection and use of sensitive personal information. Recommendations are provided on how to tackle and rectify these issues.

Impact Analysis: With the proliferation of mobile apps and mini-programs in particular during the COVID-19 outbreak which are designed to provide updates on the pandemic and monitor and contain the spread of the disease, the compilation of the Guidelines is very timely and provides comprehensive and practical guidance on how to properly handle personal information collection while safeguarding data privacy.

PBOC [Formulates](#) Measures to Spur Financial Sector Development in Yangtze River Delta

The People’s Bank of China (PBOC) Shanghai Head Office publishes supportive measures to accelerate the growth of financial sector in the Yangtze River Delta region.

- Under the Directive, 16 measures have been listed to be piloted in the Integrated Green Ecosystem Development Demonstration Zone. The measures span across eight areas including cross-regional linked credit issuance, integrated green finance services platform, mobile payment integration and sharing of financial information for the benefit of a credit rating system.

MIIT [Issues](#) Notice on Usage Adjustment of 700MHz Frequency Band

To accelerate the development of 5G and enhance the efficient use of spectrum resources, the 702-798MHz frequency band is assigned for mobile communication and the 703-743 and 758-798MHz frequency bands are planned for mobile communication systems using the frequency division duplex (FDD) mode of operation.

- Effective from 1 Apr, National Radio Regulatory Authorities will not accept and approve new licence applications of radio transmission equipment for broadcasting services in the 702-798MHz frequency band. Similarly, the provincial and municipal radio regulatory agencies will not accept and approve new applications in this band for radio and television transmission stations.
- The Notice also specifies the requirements for the use of frequency and setting up of base stations by mobile communication systems. Mobile communication systems operators are responsible for the coordination with the current users in these frequency bands to avoid interference, and the costs incurred will be borne by them.

Impact Analysis: The repurposing of the analogue television broadcasting spectrum to mobile communication not only ensures spectrum from low, medium to high frequency bands are available for 5G services, but also helps China Broadcasting Network, who currently holds 80MHz in the 700MHz frequency band, to accelerate its network development and boost its competitiveness. The broadcaster has been awarded shared spectrum in the 3.3-3.4GHz band for 5G indoor coverage and a licence to trial outdoor 5G services using the 4.9GHz band.

Hackings [Launched](#) Against Govt Agencies Through Vulnerable VPN Service

Cybersecurity researchers from Qihoo 360 reported that a series of hacking campaigns against govt agencies in China and their overseas offices in 19 countries were launched from the Korean Peninsula taking advantage of a previously unknown vulnerability in the VPN service provided by Sangfor.

- It is believed that the cybercriminals target health data on infection and sensitive information related to economic recovery. Sangfor has already released patches to fix the security problem.
- In China, waves of cyber-attacks preying on fear and confusion about the coronavirus started in Feb and the number of attacks has increased more than six-fold worldwide since then.

OneConnect, China Merchant Port [Apply](#) Blockchain Technologies to Drive Smart Ports Development

OneConnect, PingAn's fintech arm, has teamed up with China Merchant Port to create a blockchain-based platform in the Greater Bay Area to improve efficiency in the entire trading process and reduce cost for ports, upstream and downstream enterprises.

- In the initial phase, a blockchain-powered logistics platform will be created to connect all the key stakeholders including customs, ports, carriers, merchants, agents and financial institutions to enhance flows of information, goods and trade finance.
- The platform will focus on the implementation of targeted regulations, smart transformation of operations, visualization of procedures and achieving inclusiveness of finance in future.

AI Assistants to [Support](#) Case Transcription in Shanghai Judicial Courts

Ten courts in Shanghai participate in a six-month pilot program to deploy AI assistants to transcribe case notes using voice recognition technologies, handle files and present digital evidence in a bid to improve efficiency of the court hearing process and transform the judicial system.

PCPD [Issues](#) Guidelines on Employees' Health Data Collection

While the collection and processing of employees' personal data such as health conditions and travel history can enhance efforts in controlling the spread of the COVID-19, the PCPD stresses the importance of observing the principles of minimization, purpose specification and use limitation, and the data collected should be specifically used for public health purposes.

- Employers should adhere to taking appropriate, necessary and proportionate measures for data collection and anonymise personal information when processing the relevant data. Employees should be informed, through a Personal Information Collection Statement, of the purposes and scope of data collection, data retention period and to whom the data may be transferred.
- Adequate data security measures such as data encryption and access controls should be put in place to safeguard the health data collected against unauthorized access, usage and processing.

Govt [Raises](#) Funding Ceiling and Subsidy Ratio of Technology Voucher Programme

Starting 1 Apr, gov't's funding ratio for each project subsidized under the ITC's [Technology Voucher Programme](#) will be increased from two-thirds to three-quarters with the maximum amount of funding increasing from HKD400,000 to HKD600,000 (USD51,590 to USD77,390).

- These enhancements aim to further encourage local companies and organisations to employ advanced technologies and solutions to transform business processes, improve operational efficiency and raise productivity.

PCPD [Lays out](#) Guidelines for Schools and Parents to Protect Children's Privacy

As schools have been using various types of video conferencing software and online learning platforms to continue teaching amid the coronavirus outbreak, the PCPD has released guidelines to alert schools and parents to undertake appropriate measures to protect the personal data of students and children as these online teaching platforms may collect and process personal data.

- Schools wishing to collect personal data of their students, such as images or voice data when using online learning tools are to ensure it complies with provisions of the PDPO and relevant data protection principles including data minimization, transparency, data and storage limitation.
- Schools also need to inform parents and students prior to collecting their personal data, and the purpose of collection should be directly related to teaching purposes. As data users, the schools should also have a clear understanding of the privacy policies and security measures of the software and platforms to minimize the risks of misuse or leakage of personal data.

Community Prevention System [Developed](#) to Curb Spreading of COVID-19

Hong Kong-based iBonus Limited has created a software system based on mathematical modelling to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in the community by using a user-installed mobile app and dedicated terminals in public places such as libraries, schools, cinemas and gov't departments.

- Once a citizen is confirmed to have contracted the virus by medical authorities, the system will generate an alert list with all the people who have registered on the app and appeared in the same place at the same time as the infected patient, and send it to all terminals to block potential carriers from entering public areas.
- To safeguard personal privacy and prevent abuse, the system cannot be used to track users as their identity is converted to an ID number which cannot be traced back.

Impact Analysis: Successful deployment of the Prevention System will depend on users' willingness to install the app and the affordability of the terminals, especially to the private sector. Each terminal costs HKD2,000 (USD258) and the company is currently offering the software system for free to any gov't departments for combating the coronavirus. Nevertheless, people may have concerns that their personal information will be sent to gov't agencies or kept on the terminals.

Govt to [Notify](#) Intermediary Guidelines

Govt is finalizing an amendment to the Intermediary Guideline Rules of 2011, which fall under section 79 of the Information Technology (IT) Act 2000 and govern social media. These are the revised draft Intermediary Guidelines that were initially released in 2018.

- This is done so the Act keeps up with the technological advances in areas such as social media, e-commerce, cybercrime and digital financial services.
- Following the request from MeitY, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has [emailed](#) industry bodies for feedback.

Impact Analysis: The Intermediary Guidelines seek to make social media companies more responsible for the content shared on their platforms. These Guidelines ask intermediaries to conduct due diligence but propose additional requirements including verifying users through mobile numbers, tracing origin of messages would need a court order, and building automated tools to identify child porn and terror-related content. While evermore important in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic as the govt works to prevent the spread of fake news and misinformation, the requirements for traceability and takedown of content threaten privacy and security of users as well as freedom of expression.

Three [Schemes](#) to Promote Electronics Manufacturing

MeitY has notified three major schemes to promote the electronic industry in India and increasing domestic value addition. These include the [Production Linked Incentive \(PLI\) Scheme](#), [Electronics Manufacturing Cluster \(EMC\) 2.0](#) and [Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors \(SPECS\)](#).

CERT-In [Warns](#) about Zoom

The Computer Emergency Response Team of India (CERT-In) has warned users of the video conferencing app, Zoom.

- In its advisory, it outlined safety measures including keeping the Zoom software up-to-date, and setting strong passwords for all meetings and webinars.
- It also warned that unguarded usage of the app could make users vulnerable to cyber-attacks and leakage of sensitive information.

Tech [Platform](#) for Covid-19

Govt is setting up a panel of industry leaders to provide input on and develop a tech platform for the coronavirus.

- It is aimed at supporting social distancing measures after the lockdown and will alert users if they could have been exposed to the virus.
- The Govt app Aarogya Setu app is being used for contact tracing, and the panel will be tasked with addressing some of its privacy issues.

Kominfo **Proposed** Changes to Telecommunication Services

Kominfo had opened a consultation on its proposed changes to telecommunication services. These changes include a redefinition of internet telephony services for public use (ITKP), permitting ITKP service providers to distribute incoming calls that originate outside Indonesia, and increasing ITKPs' access to Universal Service Obligation infrastructure.

➤ **Impact Analysis:** This move by Kominfo seems aligned with the gov't's overall efforts to promote ease of doing business, particularly with the proposed changes in the draft Omnibus Law that affect Law 36/1999 on Telecommunications. However, there may be unintended consequences such as increasing the liabilities of ITKPs, for e.g. ensuring no call masking and legal intercept issues.

Govt to **Implement** Digital Tax on Foreign Players

The gov't has issued a Perppu (regulation in lieu of law) that mandates the taxing of foreign digital companies on two fronts: (i) a value added tax (VAT) on intangible goods and/or services sold through electronic platforms, and (ii) an income/e-transaction tax on e-commerce activities carried out by foreign individuals or digital companies with a significant economic presence (SEP).

- The Perppu has defined SEP by a company's (i) gross circulated product, (ii) sales and/or (iii) active users in Indonesia, but the thresholds will only be outlined in a forthcoming Ministry of Finance Regulation.

➤ **Impact Analysis:** Expectedly, there have been concerns surrounding this regulation, from the policy aspect of **discriminating** against foreign players to the implementation of the requirements. For instance, with the SEP criteria put in place, larger foreign digital companies can now be declared permanent establishments in Indonesia, technically allowing them to pay income tax. However, there is a lack of clarity on whether registration is also required and how the payment can be made.

BI **Proposes** Open API Standards

BI has released a paper on open API standards and is receiving comments till 30 Apr. A follow-up to the Indonesia Payment Systems Blueprint 2025 that was released in 2019, BI is proposing that data, technical, security, and governance standards be put in place.

- These include commonly recognised standards such as ISO27001, PCI DSS, and AES-256, as well as for a standard governing body (self-regulatory) be designated to further develop these standards and guidelines.
- BI is targeting a phased development and implementation of these standards from Q4 2020 to Q3 2021.

Draft Standards for Government Security Evaluation System Open for Comments

Japan has released 5 draft standards for the Security Evaluation System for Government Information Systems (ISMAP), which are open to the public for comments until 26 Apr 2020. ISMAP is under the jurisdiction of the Cabinet Secretariat, the MIC, and the METI, and was established following govt policies and study groups regarding the use of cloud services in govt information systems.

Draft IoT Security and Safety Framework [Open](#) for Comments

METI has released the IoT Security and Safety Framework (Draft), which summarises the concept of ensuring the reliability of the connection between physical space and cyber space for IoT devices in "Society 5.0" and "Connected Industries". They are accepting comments in Japanese until 31 May 2020.

Japan Govt [Asks](#) Tech Firms for User Data to Combat COVID-19

The national govt requested that major mobile carriers and tech firms voluntarily hand over data on users' locations and search data to help stop the spread of COVID-19. The data would be used to create a better picture of people's movements by using big data and help with early identification of potential infection clusters. The govt has said privacy should not be a concern because data would be anonymised.

Telcos [Committed](#) to Invest MYR400m (USD92.2m), NFCP to Continue

The additional investment by telcos as announced recently in the PRIHATIN Economic Stimulus Package are in place to upgrade, enhance and maintain the networks to address slower broadband issues. Meanwhile, a sum of MYR3bn (USD692m) has been allocated for the National Fiberisation and Connectivity Plan (NFCP) which will continue to be implemented for the year 2020 that will be fully funded through the Universal Service Provision (USP) Fund. Another initiative offered in the PRIHATIN package is that telcos will provide free Internet access during the MCO period.

- PM Tan Sri Muhyiddin [announced](#) the PRIHATIN package valued at MYR250bn to assist the nation facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ministries [Warned](#) on Cyber Threats and Zoom's Security Flaws

According to a report, the National Cyber Security Agency (NACSA) and the National Cyber Coordination and Command Centre (NC4) has warned govt ministries on several cybersecurity issues that have been detected. The reported threats include advanced persistent threat (APT) attacks, and the hacking of both govt and private websites.

- Online phishing incidents that use emails and fake applications have also been detected in an attempt by scammers to apply for Bantuan Prihatin Nasional cash aid. The public is strongly urged not to download any suspicious apps sent from an unknown source.
- Ministries were also warned that the popular Zoom teleconferencing app has security vulnerabilities for attackers to access private conversations as it does not offer end-to-end encryption.

Malaysia [Adopting](#) AI to Combat COVID-19

Huawei Malaysia is in collaboration with the Ministry of Health to contribute Huawei Cloud AI-assisted Diagnosis solutions for CT scan image analysis of possible COVID-19 patients, that can be analysed within seconds. The AI platform has been trained with 4,000+ confirmed COVID-19 patients' image data. A similar solution has been used globally to help handle the pandemic situation.

Global Tech Giants [Support](#) MDEC's #DigitalVsCovid

Alibaba, AWS, Cisco, Google, Microsoft, Tencent and Zoom have made their video conferencing tools freely available to all Malaysian businesses as part of the larger #DigitalVsCovid Movement for Malaysians to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The move will amplify all Malaysian businesses' work-from-home (WFH) capabilities.

MDEC [Introduces](#) SME Digital Quickwins to Support SMEs During MCO

The SME Digital Quickwins initiative, an effort within the #DigitalVsCovid, aims to address the ongoing issues faced by SMEs during the nation's MCO. The initiative has two focus areas; provide easy and fast support capabilities for SMEs seeking to connect to technology solution providers, and preparing SMEs to be digitally ready and prepared for a post-MCO era with next steps planning.

- While there are other programmes that have been made available for SMEs to jumpstart their recovery process such as the 100 Go Digital platform and SME Business Digitalisation Grant, SMEs are encouraged to register and connect with the SME Digital Quickwins.

Myanmar Govt [Orders](#) Telcos to Block Access to Over 200 Websites

The Ministry of Transport and Communications issued a directive compelling all telcos operating in the country to block 221 websites under section 77 of the Telecommunications Law, which allows the govt to instruct that sites be blocked during emergency situations. These sites were alleged by the govt to contain explicit content including child sex abuse. Approximately 50 of the listed sites were listed as disseminating ‘fake news’, but critics have noted that this list includes several prominent ethnic media outlets such as the Development Media Group and the Rakhine State-based Narinjara.

- Norwegian telco Telenor initially refused to comply with the order to block sites listed as disseminating ‘fake news’, on the grounds that Myanmar’s govt had not established sufficient legal grounds to do so. It has since complied with the order, [issuing](#) a statement clarifying that failing to do so may have had “wider implications in terms of servicing the public”.

NCSC [Publishes](#) Security Advice for Public Servants Working From Home

The GCISO (Government Communications Security Bureau) and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) have published a Zoom Security [Advice](#) for public servants, a [guidance](#) on working remotely and cloud security, useful cybersecurity [resources](#) and a [guidance](#) on securing Microsoft Azure and Office 365.

Privacy Commissioner [Says](#) Health Authorities Can Use Mobile Phone Data to Track COVID-19

The Privacy Commissioner says there is no objection to health authorities tracking and tracing people infected with the coronavirus via data from their mobile network operators. Under existing New Zealand laws, the Ministry of Health can go to a mobile phone company and ask it for movement data on their customers who are infected as such data is “necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to public health”. The Council for Civil Liberties is calling for transparency and that these data collection powers only be used during the COVID-19 emergency and be given up later.

- Datacom has created a system that lets the New Zealand Police access location data from Spark, Vodafone and 2degrees customers' mobile phones.
- The Waikato DHB (district health board) has [used](#) the excuse of safeguarding privacy for not disclosing the number of COVID-19 cases in its districts. The Waikato Civil Defence and Emergency Management committee has expressed frustration with the Waikato DHB over the lack of information as it cannot properly plan a COVID response.
- The New Zealand Technology Industry Association and New Zealand Health IT have not been approached yet by the govt to discuss contact tracing methods. The Ministry of Health has set up a new national [centre](#) to do manual tracing.

COVID-19 Bill [Passes](#) Brings Forward R&D Refundability

The legislation, COVID-19 Response (Taxation and Social Assistance Urgent Measures) [Bill](#), supports the measures taken by the govt to respond to the coronavirus outbreak. Business can now claim tax deductions for assets like computers, mobile phones, cameras, microphones, headphones and other equipment required to work from home. R&D refundability will be brought forward by one year to the 2019-20 income year to help relieve cashflow problems and encourage businesses to retain their R&D staff.

Chorus to [Provide](#) Broadband Connectivity to Needy Student Households

Chorus will offer such support for up to 50,000 homes with students. These homes stand to get Internet service for the next six months where their ISPs do not have to pay the wholesale charges to Chorus. The Ministry of Education will help identify those homes needing broadband installed for educational purposes. Eligible households will receive either a fixed line or fixed wireless connection.

- Chorus has started to publish daily network broadband traffic [updates](#).
- The govt is also building up the resources it provides on the [Learning from Home](#) and [Ki te Ao Mārama](#) websites.

All-of-Government (AoG) Procurement Contracts to be [Extended](#) for 12 months

Some AoG contracts will be extended for a further period of time and the govt will suspend some of its current sourcing activity. The govt will seek an extension of 12 months for the AoG IT hardware contracts set to expire in Sep 2020 with an option to appoint additional panel providers.

Privacy [Concerns](#) Rise Over Video Calling App Houseparty

Houseparty, owned by the California-based Epic Games, has become New Zealand's most popular app during the COVID-19 lockdown. Local privacy experts are raising concerns over the data that Houseparty collects being exploited for commercial means. Its existing privacy policy is likely to be found non-compliant with the new Privacy Bill that will come into action in the fall.

ICT Advocacy Group [Asks](#) Govt to Create Action Plan for Connectivity Issues

The Better Broadband Alliance (BBA) has asked the IATF-EID in charge of the COVID-19 response to craft an action plan to address connectivity issues in the Philippines, which have become increasingly urgent in light of the pandemic. Among BBA's recommendations are increased bandwidth for consumers, new installation of telecom and broadband facilities, and fast tracking of Free Public Wi-Fi deployment to include essential institutions.

NPC [Calls](#) for Protecting Privacy After COVID-19 Patients Asked to Waive Rights

After a joint statement from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, the Philippine Medical Association, and the Philippine College of Surgeons calling for COVID-19 patients and suspected cases to waive their data privacy rights, the NPC issued a statement saying that data privacy does not hinder the response to COVID-19.

- The NPC also asserted that waiving privacy rights and disclosing information could induce fear in the public and lead to more cases of patients and healthcare workers being attacked. While patients can disclose information if they so choose, they should be informed of the risk in order to give informed consent pursuant to the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Senators [Seek](#) Expansion of E-Learning and Telemedicine

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian said the Department of Education should increase the capacity of its online-based education for the next school year in the event of a prolonged crisis due to COVID-19, and also urged increasing the use and distribution of non-digital resources for those without Internet connection. Sen. Sonny Angara said that given the need for telemedicine as a viable alternative to physical visits to doctors, he is going to file a Department of Health-endorsed bill to establish a Philippine eHealth system and services that covers telehealth and telemedicine.

Govt [Looking](#) to Adopt SG App TraceTogether

DICT is coordinating with the Department of Health and other govt agencies on the possible adoption of the Singapore-based app TraceTogether as one of the potential tools in addressing COVID-19. Singapore has said it is willing to provide technical assistance to the Philippines on the app.

PLDT [Bans](#) Employees from Using Zoom

Telco PLDT-Smart Communications banned its employees from using Zoom in all their conference calls and meetings. The company labelled Zoom as malware that would expose the group to security vulnerabilities.

Digital Rights Advocates [Call](#) for Repeal of Fake News Provision in COVID-19 Law

A coalition of digital rights advocates led by the Foundation for Media Alternatives has called for the repeal of a provision penalising fake news in the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act (Republic Act No. 11469), which was passed as a response to COVID-19. The law penalises the creation and spread of fake news on social media and other platforms, and the coalition contends that the provision may be used to tamp down on free speech.

Govt [Launches](#) QR Code System to Speed Up Movement for Frontliners

The IATF-EID has launched RapidPass.ph, a website aiming to help facilitate movement for frontliners and priority vehicles using a QR code-based system for permits issuance.

DOST [Developing](#) New Technology for COVID-19 Response

DOST is developing several technologies in the fight against COVID-19, including mobile AI-enabled thermal scanners mounted on drones and the use of big data analytics and transportation network analysis to support traffic management during the quarantine period.

IMDA [Announces](#) 'Circuit Breaker' Support Measures

In support of the announced '[circuit breaker](#)' period (7 Apr – 1 Jun), IMDA has announced a number of measures to facilitate and ensure safe distancing, including:

- Supporting telcos to make immediate upgrades to their networks to ensure smooth working and learning from home arrangements;
- Working with content providers, including MediaCorp, Singtel, and Starhub, in bolstering content available; and
- Extending connectivity access to those who need it, such as low-income students.

MAS [Launches](#) SGD125m Support Package for FSIs and Fintechs

As part of broader COVID-19 efforts, the support package recently announced by MAS directed at FSIs and fintechs, will:

- Support workforce training and manpower costs through a new Training Allowance Grant, and doubling salary support for hiring fresh graduates or other sectors;
- Strengthen digitalization and operational resilience through a new Digital Acceleration Grant, encouraging the use of digital tools, collaboration solutions and virtual conferencing;
- Enhance access to digital platforms and tools by providing fintechs with six months free access to API exchange.

[SingPass App](#) to Become Main Gateway to Govt Services

On 31 Mar, the govt announced plans to phase out physical tokens by Apr 2021 (currently representing only 2% of logins), ensuring that the SingPass app becomes the main way users access govt digital services.

 **Impact Analysis:** This announcement comes during a time where the SingPass app has seen significant use being utilised for health declaration forms, and contract tracing efforts when patrons visit cafes and restaurants (pre-amplified 'circuit breaker' measures being put in place).

MSIT, KOSA [Launch](#) Website to Provide Info for Remote Work and E-learning Solutions

The MSIT together with the Korea Software Industry Association (KOSA) have launched a [website](#) to help SMEs and schools gain awareness and access to suitable solutions for remote work and e-learning opportunities amidst restrictions on travel, with the govt promoting more telecommuting and remote education to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

- The Financial Services Commission (FSC) also [committed](#) to continue to promote and implement the Fintech Innovation Fund to help fintech startups attract investment funding.

Telcos [Provide](#) Free Access on Education Content

The three major telcos in South Korea are providing free access for teachers, students and parents when viewing educational content with online classes starting at elementary through high schools as schools have been indefinitely postponed.

- The three telcos will also work with provincial govts to provide Internet for low-income families.
- IPTV service providers will also provide educational materials in real-time and establish channels to broadcast content.
- LG Uplus and SK Broadband will also help upgrade bandwidth and improve networks in schools to help handle the increased usage.
- Samsung and LG are also providing students in low-income families with tablet PCs.

BOK [Pilots](#) Central Bank Digital Currency

The Bank of Korea (BOK) is undertaking a 22-month pilot to test the technical and legal issues around issuing a Central Bank Digital Currency in South Korea. The pilot reflects a reversal of the BOK's stance to launch a digital currency, following similar moves by other countries such as the US, China, and Japan.

- The CBDC initiative will be led by the BOK's digital currency research team, while an advisory group including internal and external experts will help review technical and legal details.

[Cyberattacks](#) Up 21% in Q1 Amidst Coronavirus Outbreak

The number of cyberattacks detected in Q1 reached 1.74 million, up 21% y-o-y due to a higher number of people working remotely, with hackers targeting remote-work settings which had lax security measures.

Taiwan [Blocks](#) Zoom on Security and Privacy Grounds

Taiwan's Department of Cyber Security has decided to ban all govt agencies and selected non-govt agencies from using video conference software and applications that pose security risks and raise privacy concerns, such as Zoom. Alternative international products from Google and Microsoft are recommended instead.

- The order is issued based on Taiwan's Cybersecurity Management Act which came into force in 2019 and states that govt agencies shall not use information and communication systems with security concerns.

CHT, FET, Taiwan Mobile's 5G Business Plans [Gain](#) Approval from Regulator

NCC's has formed a review [committee](#), comprising 11 experts in communication technologies, consumer protection, accounting and economics, to evaluate the 5G business plans and network security measures submitted by the five MNOs that won spectrum in the auction which ended in Feb.

- While NCC has green-lit CHT and FET's business plans, Taiwan Mobile's business plan has been approved on a conditional basis. The operator has to file an application and obtain permission from the regulator if it intends to share its core network or spectrum with other telcos.
- Regarding network security plans, CHT obtained approval after the company provided detailed information on measures tailored for personal data protection, information security risk detection and management.

KBank Preparing a Technology R&D Unit

Kasikornbank (KBank) has announced plans to set up a R&D unit with a focus on emerging technologies to ensure it is able to face the challenges of a post-pandemic world.

- The new unit will first focus on R&D that improves customer experiences when using the bank's services.
- It will also work on harnessing the emerging technologies that can ramp up competitiveness and open business opportunities.
- Lastly, it will help ensure the bank is optimally positioned to address the needs and expectations of customers once the coronavirus pandemic abates.

Free Mobile Data [Amid](#) Coronavirus Outbreak

The Thai govt has announced it will provide the public free mobile data as companies initiate work-from-home policies and schools use remote learning amid the coronavirus outbreak.

- Starting 10 Apr, 10GB of mobile data will be provided each month so the public can stay home and limit the spread of COVID-19.
- The measures come just as the NBTC [shows](#) that data usage among customers of the three major mobile operators surged 11.1% in Mar from a month earlier.
- In this context, mobile operators [expect](#) to fare well thanks to healthy demand for their services, despite the looming impact of the coronavirus outbreak on Thailand's economy.

All 292 MIT Public Admin Services Available Online

As part of its ongoing digital transformation efforts, MIT has [made all 292 public administrative services available online](#) for citizens to access and use.

Impact Analysis: In these times of increasing movement restrictions due to COVID-19, Vietnam's ministries have been racing to get their public services digitised and online. Besides the MIT's efforts to digitise their services, the MIC has launched a "[Technology for Digital Life](#)" campaign which will see the launch of a digital content system, digital platform for transport services, and a digital payment system, [Hanoi's Department of Customs has established a single window and automated aviations customs supervision system](#), and the Department of Taxation is piloting [electronic registration fee payments for cars and motorbikes](#).

Prime Ministerial Decree Declares Online Administrative Procedures Legal

Prime Minister Decree No 45/2020/ND-CP rules that [administrative procedures conducted online have the same legal validity as other forms](#).



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