



PRIVACY REF

Effective operational privacy

Case Study AFERM launches its journey toward managing privacy risks

The Association for Federal Enterprise Risk Management (AFERM) commits to provide for its 650+ members a forum for discussion of issues relevant to participants in the federal risk management profession. Privacy has become an important focal point for most industry sectors, including the federal government. The AFERM Board felt it might be time to consider its own privacy level of risk and risk posture.

Finding the right guide for the journey

Recognizing that AFERM is a maturing organization staffed entirely by volunteers, the AFERM Board felt Privacy Ref brought the necessary pragmatism and practicality, as well as offering a full spectrum of privacy risk management solutions. Since AFERM is just starting its journey down the privacy road, Privacy Ref will work with the non-profit as a partner—taking the journey with the organization and at its pace.

First, AFERM needed to understand the potential risks and how well prepared the organization was to address them. Privacy Ref brought a balanced perspective to the baseline assessment. Privacy Ref always starts its evaluation with a systematic, but minimally intrusive process that results in meaningful, prioritized recommendations based on comparisons with well-regarded evaluation standards, including Generally Accepted Privacy Principles (GAPP). GAPP is a maturity model jointly created by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA).

Following the Privacy Ref assessment, AFERM has a list of prioritized recommendations it may consider for implementation. Privacy Ref can help AFERM start where they are, taking the right steps according to AFERM's schedule, budget and available staffing. Starting from the early stages of a privacy program can be advantageous because each step is going in the right direction without having to undo previous steps.

Privacy Ref can fill any gaps for them, as appropriate. They have the tools and knowledge workers in place to actually complete necessary tasks or fill required roles in privacy leadership anywhere along the privacy spectrum. Alternatively, they can train designated folks within the organization.

AFERM's VP at large, Ed Hau observed that "As a maturing organization staffed entirely by volunteers, it is vital to work with a privacy firm that is flexible and offers pragmatic, practical solutions."

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Planning for the journey

AFERM's outlook on managing privacy matches its vision for the organization. Privacy doesn't have a beginning or end. Vulnerabilities and risks are omnipresent. AFERM sees its future as one of a scaled organization where tools will likely take it to increasingly riskier territory and with the Internet being a primary channel of communications and business interactions. Therefore, it is vital to have a privacy-consulting partner with ready solutions that can scale with the organization.

All of these privacy checklist items point to a need to ensure that AFERM's privacy risk advisors be knowledgeable, flexible, and available. Privacy Ref is all of those things and their basic approach being as a partner rather than just a consultant, made them a solid candidate to meet AFERM's plan to start a long-term relationship as the organization's privacy risk management advisors.

“Recognizing that AFERM is just starting its journey, and privacy has no beginning or end, we appreciate that Privacy Ref shares our view that this is a long-term partnership. Privacy Ref’s philosophy of building a relationship, rather than simply solving an immediate problem makes them a very good match for our expectation of continuing to scale as an organization, which means our privacy program will need to scale as well.”