

Distributed Ledger Technology and Data Protection – Henry Chang

Governments would like to think that their data protection laws are technology-neutral, that no matter what kind of technology emerges, data protection laws protect data subjects based on how their personal data is being used. Every now and then, however, a piece of technology will come along to challenge that notion.

Distributed ledger technology (DLT) is perhaps one of these technologies. Similar to the impacts of cloud a few years ago, many characteristics of DLT that makes the technology appealing, also happens to be going against the principles of data protection.

Some of the appealing characteristics of DLT include disintermediation, guaranteed integrity and distributed resilience. These characteristics have the consequences of universal accessibility, immutability and cross-border storage which cause concerns over data protection principles of purpose limitation, accuracy and retention, and cross-border data flow. The speaker will explain how DLT offers these characteristics, why they are concerns for privacy protection and how attempts are being made to address them in the design and implementation of DLT.