



# **Protecting Learners: The VitalSource Guide to Privacy & Data Security in EdTech**

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## What You Need to Know about Privacy and Security

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The discussion around privacy and security has always been an important one, but given the state of education, it has become critical to understand how to go fully digital without sacrificing the privacy of your learners.

At VitalSource, we don't just adhere to the highest standards and best practices, we have spent decades creating them with industry partners.

Use this insider's guide to privacy and security to evaluate whether the products and services you are using, and companies you are working with, are using best practices, leading in the industry, complying with industry standards, and are proven committed to privacy and security.



## How do you know if you're in good hands?

Asking each of these questions will help you see if the company you are working with is fully committed to your user's privacy, and the products designed with privacy and security in mind.

1. How much Personally Identifiable Information is being collected by the platform or provider?
2. What kind of control do users have over their data?
3. How long is data stored?
4. With what standards and certifications should a platform or provider be complying?
5. What additional safeguards are there?

# Privacy by Design

**ASK: How much Personally Identifiable Information is being collected by the platform or provider?**

Now, more than ever, students and institutions are turning to digital learning, and they should be able to do so knowing their privacy is protected and respected by the companies entrusted with their learning.

## **EXPECT:**

1. Vendors should not collect any more information from users than what is required to deliver the service or facilitate the transaction.
2. Sound practices for securing user data at all times, in flight and at rest.
3. In the world of digital course materials, this means products are designed to seamlessly deliver course materials to learners with a single click and can work without requiring Personally Identifiable Information (PII).
4. That your providers effectively communicate and scope the impact of various purchase models on zero-PII efforts.

# User Control

**ASK: What kind of control do users have over their data?**

Truly securing data and protecting privacy happens long before the users get to it.

## **EXPECT:**

1. Users should have control over how their data is stored.
2. Vendors should never share user data without their consent or sell identifiable data to a third party.
3. The user should always be able to opt in or out of their data being shared, especially to third parties.
4. The platforms you are using should clearly comply with regulations regarding PII handling and be able to demonstrate how they do it.

# Storing Data

ASK: How long is data stored?

EXPECT:

1. Personal data should only be stored for the minimum time required to provide services or fulfill contractual obligations; beyond that, personal data may not be used in the best interest of the user.

# Standards & Compliance

ASK: With what standards and certifications should a platform or provider be complying?

EXPECT:

1. It's easy to state that privacy and security are important; one way to know if best practices are in use by asking what standards your partners comply with.
2. Investment in products and technology maintain conformance with the standards that matter, such as GDPR, COPPA, FERPA, Safe Harbor, the UK Data Protection Act of 2018, the California Consumer Privacy Laws, and others.
3. Investments in third-party audits, such as SOC II.
4. Given VitalSource's longevity and leadership in these areas, you can use the VitalSource Advantage Compliance, Standards, and Affiliations Checklist as an easy resource to understand levels of compliance across many of your platforms and products.

# More Safeguards

## ASK: What additional safeguards are there?

As you evaluate products, privacy is crucial, but there is more to know. In addition to personal data, consider the network and product security. Companies that are truly invested in privacy and data security will seek third-party audits and technologies to secure their platforms. Best practices for these types of security include the following:

### EXPECT:

#### Physical Security

1. Platforms should be hosted in data centers that have been certified as ISO 27001, PCI/DSS Service Provider Level 1, and/or SOC II compliance.
2. All third-party systems and services should undergo thorough third party technical and contractual due diligence.

#### Network Security

3. Platforms should utilize best-in-class cloud products that can work to scan network vulnerability, as well as the use of intrusion detection and intrusion prevention systems to keep a continuous watch on the security of customers' data.

#### Data Security

4. Data should be stored using logical separation of client data in a SaaS multi-tenant environment that is encrypted in transit, and at rest, and should be automatically backed up.

#### Disaster Recovery Planning

5. While we never want the worst to happen, your EdTech partners should be prepared.
6. Live DR systems that are geographically separated with automated fail over should be your minimum expectation.

#### Product Security

7. Customers should be able to manage access authentication and single-sign-on (SSO) options.



### The VitalSource Advantage Compliance, Standards, and Affiliations Checklist




Do your learning and digital content management platforms and tools meet and exceed industry standards in privacy, security, and accessibility?



Use the VitalSource Master Compliance, Standards, and Affiliations Checklist\* to ensure that you are investing in the most secure and compliant technologies available.

\*Current as of April 2020

PRIVACY	VitalSource
Zero PII integration options for maximum user privacy	
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Conformance	
Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) Conformance	
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Conformance	
California Consumer Privacy Laws Conformance	
UK Data Protection Act of 2018 Conformance	
Safe Harbor Privacy Shield Conformance	

ACCESSIBILITY	VitalSource
DAISY Consortium Friend 	✓
WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility conformance documentation	✓
Long time sponsor of the NFB	✓
Winner of the 2019 Accessibility in Publishing DAISY award	✓
ASPIRE Gold rating	✓
Helped create the EPUB accessibility specification	✓
Content Transparency Initiative	✓
Accessibility metadata feed to our partners	✓

EDTECH INTEGRATION	VitalSource
IMS Member & LTI Certification 	✓
LTI-Advantage Certification 	✓
LTI Deep Linking & Grade Return	✓
COUNTER compliant 	✓
CALIPER Certification	✓

SECURITY	VitalSource
Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI-DSS) Support 	✓
2 factor authentication for administrative access	✓
RSA public/private key 	✓
CloudFlare 	✓
Cloud Armor	✓
DRM hardening technologies	✓



LEARNER TOOLS	VitalSource
Offline App support for IOS, Android, Mac & Windows PLUS Kindle Fire and Chromebook	✓
Localized in U.S English & 36 other languages	✓
INTEGRATED STUDY TOOLS	VitalSource
Search in book and entire library	✓
Fast highlights mode	✓
Text read aloud	✓
Figure search	✓
Citations	✓
Visual display adjustment	✓
Review Mode	✓
Export to Microsoft OneNote	✓
Flashcard creation	✓
Assignment Creation	✓

TRUST AND SCALE	VitalSource
SOC II report covering security, privacy and confidentiality available	✓
24x7x365 access to Tier 1 support in English and Spanish with support facilities in North America	✓
Disaster Recovery protocols and geographically separated sites live and maintained	✓
Infrastructure hosted on Premium tier of GCP. North America served from U.S. based data center	✓
Over 120 global end points for content access	✓
Proven robust platform servicing millions of users and billions of requests each month worldwide	✓
World class content security trusted by thousands of publishers	✓
Best-in-class platform uptime	✓

**At VitalSource, we are proud of the decades of commitment to protected and private learning and buying experiences.**

Our products are built with privacy by design. We invest in those products to stay up to date. We have outside audits performed against our systems covering security, privacy, and confidentiality.

All of these are steps that companies should be taking to be fully and operationally committed to privacy and security.

# **Go fully digital without sacrificing the privacy and security of your learners.**

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**To learn more about VitalSource's commitment to data privacy and security, visit [get.vitalsource.com/learning-center](https://get.vitalsource.com/learning-center).**



**Protect Learners.**

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