

Tightening the grip: Governance of information security in the higher education sector in Norway

Agnethe Sidselrud¹, Rolf Sture Normann², Tommy Tranvik³, Sadia Zaka⁴, Ingrid Olsen Fossum⁴

1 UNT - The Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services for Higher Education and Research, agnethe.sidselrud@unit.no

2 UNT - The Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services for Higher Education and Research, rolf.sture.normann@unit.no

3 UNT - The Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services for Higher Education and Research, tommy.tranvik@unit.no

4 UNT - The Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services for Higher Education and Research, sadia.zaka@unit.no

5 UNT - The Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services for Higher Education and Research, ingrid.olsen.fossum@unit.no

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Keywords

Governance of information security, national coordination, digitalization strategy, information security strategy.

1. SUMMARY

The Ministry of Higher Education in Norway introduces a governance model for sector governance of information security and data privacy in the higher education sector. UNT - The Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services for Higher Education and Research is responsible for the practical implementation of the model in the HE-sector. This paper presents the background for establishing the model, the main contents and the gains for the higher education institutions. The goal for this paper is to share knowledge, best practice and inspire the various stakeholders to strengthen their focus on governance and leadership of information technology and data privacy on both the institutional and national level.

2. BACKGROUND

The Norwegian Ministry of Higher Education and Research published a new strategy for digitalization of higher education. The strategy addresses the dependence between successful digitalization and good information security. The strategy defines goals for the various groups of stakeholders - researchers, students, leaders and administrators, i.e.: students should be taught about ethical, legal and information security related perspectives during their studies while leaders are expected to protect the values and interests of their higher education institution (HEI). The strategy states the need for coordinated leadership of information security on the institutional and on the national level as a condition for succeeding in obtaining the sector goals for the high quality in education and research.

2. NEED FOR BETTER INFORMATION SECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION

The HEIs have been implementing the Information Security Management System (ISO27001) on the institutional level during the past couple of years. In addition, implementation of the GDPR in the HE-sector during 2017 and 2018 have also contributed to increased focus on data protection and the need of procedures in order to comply with the regulation. The big amount of effort and time invested in the GDPR-work at the HEIs imply that the level of data protection and information security was not satisfactory prior to the introduction of GDPR, as GDPR includes moderate changes to the Norwegian Personal Act.

The Norwegian Ministry of Higher Education stated the need for better information security and data protection the higher education sector in Norway and the need for strengthening the governance of the HE-sector within these areas. The Ministry and UNIT - the Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services for Higher Education and Research have developed a national governance model for information security and data protection in the HE-sector.

3. NEW NATIONAL GOVERNANCE MODEL - GAINS FOR THE HEIS

The governance model is being implemented in the HE-sector during 2019. The immediate gains for the institutions are:

- **More clear direction** for HEIs work with information security in their systems and services. The Ministry and UNIT work on new sub-strategy for information security and privacy with clear objectives for the sector and the HEIs
- **Planned implementation** of the sub-strategy. The Ministry and UNIT will publish an action plan that implements the sub-strategy and a general policy that provides guidelines and communicates requirements.
- **Closer dialogue and follow-up** between the HEIs and the Ministry. UNIT is currently mapping the status for information security at the institutional level in order to provide a national report as well as risk assessment on the sector level. The dialogue and follow-up takes place during the first part of the 2019 by means of series of face-to-face meetings between UNIT and leadership of each HEI in Norway.
- **Better and more accurate priorities** made by the Ministry. Based on the risk assessment conducted on the national level by UNIT, the Ministry will be able to adjust necessary actions and earmark funding for the relevant areas.
- **Customized advice and guidance** for the HE-sector. The national governance model will make it easier to perceive the challenges in the Norwegian HE-sector in the overall perspective and make it possible to write sector-specific guidelines and tools.

4. EXPERIENCES FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT AND CONCLUSIONS

The governance model is being implemented in the HE-sector during 2019. The experiences from the process of establishing the model and the project of implementing the model in the HE-sector will be presented and discussed. The goal is to share knowledge and inspire the various stakeholders to strengthen their focus on governance and leadership of information technology and data privacy on the institutional and national level.

5. REFERENCES

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6. AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Agnethe Sidselrud

<https://no.linkedin.com/in/agnethe-sidselrud-b154981?trk=pub-pbmap>

Rolf Sture Normann

<https://no.linkedin.com/in/rolf-sture-n-201a971?trk=prof-samename-name>

Tommy Tranvik

<https://app.cristin.no/persons/show.jsf?id=8804>

Sadia Zaka

<https://no.linkedin.com/in/sadia-zaka-b63920121>

Ingrid Olsen Fossum

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ingrid-fossum-234b513b>