Report Society

BizMOOC Report 1.3c

Society Survey on MOOCs

BizMOOC – BizMOOC – Knowledge Alliance to enable a European-wide exploitation of the potential of MOOCs for the world of business
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Society Survey on MOOCs

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Report based on interviews carried out by all BizMOOC partners: FH JOANNEUM Graz (AT), Open University (UK), University de Alicante (ES), Burgas Free University (BG), University of Economics Krakow (PL), AVL List GmbH (AT), iversity GmbH (DE), Hasso-Plattner-Institut (HPI) für Softwaresystemtechnik GmbH (DE), DIDA srl (IT), Košice IT Valley (SK), The National Unions of Students in Europe (BE), EADTU (NL)

Abbreviations

BizMOOC – Knowledge Alliance to enable a European-wide exploitation of the potential of MOOCs for the world of business
EC – European Commission
HE – Higher Education
HEI(s) – Higher Education Institution(s)
ICT – Information and Communication Technology
IT – Information Technology
MOOC(s) – Massive Open Online Course(s)

1. Executive summary

This report describes the results of a survey carried out with a range of citizens across Europe including students, non-formal/lifelong learners, the unemployed and employees in a range of industries. The survey focused on participant engagement with Massive Open Online Courses (hereinafter MOOC) and was conducted between April and September 2016 as part of the EU co-funded BizMOOC project which investigates the potential of MOOCs for the world of business.

The aim of the survey was to examine (potential) learners' perspectives of MOOCs. In particular, the survey focused on learning preferences and experiences of participants with regard to MOOC and information and communication technology (ICT) more broadly. The survey also asked participants for their views of the MOOCs that the BizMOOC project will produce collaboratively in 2017. Three MOOCs will be designed and offered in accordance with the needs and gaps determined from the research carried out through the society survey and the interviews performed within higher education institutions and different types of organisations (as presented in two corresponding reports).

With increased global awareness of the MOOC movement over the

past 5 years, we expected to see a high level of understanding of MOOCs from survey participants. However, in fact only 40% of the BizMOOC survey sample currently use MOOCs and about 55% have not used a MOOC. This can be contrasted with 84% of participants who use the Internet for developing their skills and/or to learn something new. In spite of this, 85% of the sample who do not currently use MOOCs are planning to do so in the future.

The three MOOCs to be designed and offered by the BizMOOC project were regarded as eye-catching by the respondents. However, 70% of the sample intends to participate in the MOOC focused on 'innovation, creativity and idea creation' whilst 51% and 42% of participants reported an interest in 'learning to learn' and 'sense of initiative (entrepreneurship & intrapreneurship)', respectively.

More generally, face-to-face rather than online courses were still preferred by participants and those surveyed expressed a general preference for blended learning for professional skills development. However, for independent or non-formal learning, learners indicated that online courses and video platforms were the main sources of online learning content. Our research revealed that whilst the low-cost or free at the point of use characteristic of MOOCs is seen as an important benefit by most of those surveyed, the massive (open to a large number of participants) aspect is not seen as a motivator for participating in MOOCs.

2. Introduction

Despite a growing awareness of Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) by large parts of society as well as of its importance as a tool of getting the global educational system further than the already known lifelong learning (Skiba, 2012), there is erratic knowledge and use of MOOCs across the world. A similar pattern can be seen at European level (Jansen and

Schuwer, 2015) and whilst there is room for improvement in all regions, this is particularly the case in Eastern Europe where MOOCs are still under-employed (Dumitrescu, 2015).

In January 2016, a project "BizMOOC – Knowledge Alliance to enable a European-wide exploitation of the potential of MOOCs for the world of business" (hereinafter BizMOOC) was launched with the support of the European Commission (EC) which aims to enable businesses, society (labour force) and universities to increase their activities and better exploit the potential of MOOCs. BizMOOC specifically focuses on work force and higher education (HE) training and the acquisition of key labour market competencies through the application of new methodologies for online teaching and learning. To facilitate this aim, BizMOOC will develop common standards and frameworks on MOOCs which reflect the experiences of HE, business communities and citizens.

The first phase of the project was dedicated to the creation of a common body of knowledge and identification of the needs of the three target groups: HE institutions (HEIs), business communities/employers and citizens (which includes the employed, unemployed, students and life-long or non-formal learners). To identify the needs and existing gaps in provision for citizens, an online survey was developed and translated into nine different languages in order to enable the widest participation possible. The following report summarises the findings of this research with regard to training, education, professional development and human resources development (HRD). Using the findings from this survey, the BizMOOC consortium intends to determine European citizens' perspectives of MOOCs.

All eleven partners of BizMOOC were involved in the design and the distribution of the survey using their existing networks and new connections including those developed as part of the accompanying BizMOOC project interviews carried out with HEIs and business community representatives. As a result, more than

1100 persons answered the BizMOOC survey.

3. Methodology and sample

An online survey was collaboratively designed in English by members of the BizMOOC consortium. The questionnaire was divided into three parts:

1. General demographic information
2. Specific aspects of online learning and MOOCs.
3. Interest in participating in the courses produced under the BizMOOC umbrella.

To ensure the survey was accessible to as many people as possible, the English version was translated into nine different languages: Italian, Slovak, Russian, Polish, French, Romanian, Spanish, German and Greek. Aside from the English version, the Slovak, Polish, German, Spanish and Italian versions were the most used by people living in the countries in which those languages are spoken.

The survey was distributed from April until September 2016 via email and social media networks (Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) of the partners in the BizMOOC consortium, as well as through additional contacts and networks of the people interviewed as part of the project.

The BizMOOC project set a target of 1,000 respondents to the survey, but 1,193 people responded overall (see Table 1). To this end, 24 closed questions were designed and included within the survey (Annex 1 contains more details in this sense).

Research Design	
Used method	Quantitative and qualitative survey
Type of data acquisition	Online surveys (Survey Monkey tool)
Structure of the method	24 closed questions
Sample	1.193 persons all over the world
Languages	10 different languages
Time frame	01/04/2016 – 01/09/2016
Analysis method	Qualitative content analysis and quantitative analysis (mixed analysis)

Table 1. Summary and research design. Source: Source: BizMOOC.

4. Results

The results presented here address each of the three parts of the survey.

4.1. General demographics

Among those who received and responded to the survey, both inside and outside of the European Union, more than half originate or reside in Austria, Poland and Slovakia. However, respondents from the eleven countries listed in Table 2 make up 84% of the sample.

	Country of ORIGIN		Country of RESIDENCE	
Answer Options	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Slovakia	**270**	**21.90%**	**267**	**22.38%**
Austria	**159**	**15.80%**	**165**	**13.83%**
Poland	**149**	**14.90%**	**154**	**12.91%**
Germany	68	6.70%	76	6.37%
Mexico	55	5.50%	56	4.69%
Italy	52	5.20%	52	4.36%
United Kingdom (UK)	51	2.60%	56	4.69%
Bulgaria	47	2.40%	48	4.02%
Spain	35	3.20%	41	3.44%
Greece	33	3.10%	25	2.10%
Croatia	29	1.50%	24	2.01%
Romania	28	2.20%	20	1.68%
Ukraine	19	1.50%	8	0.67%
United States of America (USA)	19	1.00%	13	1.09%
Rest of the world	179	12.50%	188	15.80%
TOTAL	**1,193**	**100.00%**	**1,193**	**100.00%**

Table 2. Structure of the respondents. Source: BizMOOC.

4.2. Age, gender, education and employment status

The majority of respondents are aged between 18 and 55 years, with a roughly equal division in terms of gender with a smaller advantage of female representation (see Table 3). The respondents are highly educated, with more than 70% holding at least an undergraduate degree. A high percentage of respondents identified themselves as either employed and/or students.

Age group	Value	%	Gender	Value	%	Education level	Value	%	Employment status	Value	%
Under 18	3	0.30%	Male	531	44.50 %	High School	250	20.40 %	Student	431	36.10%
18-24	363	30.40 %	Female	642	53.80 %	Bachelor	300	24.50 %	Employed	755	63.30%
25-35	313	26.20 %	Transgender	5	0.40%	Master	337	27.60 %	Unemployed	54	4.50%
36-55	418	35.00 %	Prefer not to say	15	1.30%	PhD	228	18.60 %	Not able to work	7	0.60%
56-65	83	7.00%				Other	108	8.80%	Retired	11	0.90%
Over 65	13	1.10%							Other	57	4.80%
TOTAL	1,193	100%	TOTAL	1,193	100%	TOTAL	1,193	100%	TOTAL	1,193	100%

Table 3. Structure of the sample. Source: BizMOOC.

4.3. Specific aspects related to online learning and MOOCs

More than 84% of respondents declared that they use the web often or always to develop their skills and/or to learn something new (see Table 4). Furthermore, for respondents who did not use the web for learning something new, the majority (71.3%) declared they would use it often and only 1.3% stated they would not use it at all.

	Value	%
Never	8	0.70%
Sometimes	175	14.70%
Often	640	53.60%
Always	370	31.00%
TOTAL	1,193	100.00%

Table 4. The use of the web for skills development and for learning something new. Source: BizMOOC.

When asked which resources would they use to learn something new online, YouTube videos, specific tutorials and open training/open content were most prominent responses (see Table 5). More than 200 respondents also considered using other online resources such as scientific blogs and academic articles, Moodle platforms with specific content, licensed materials, scholar Google and MOOCs (counting with over 11%) to learn something new.

	Value	%
Youtube videos according to the content needed	804	68.00%
Specific tutorials recommended by specialists in the field	853	72.20%
Open training/ open content	745	63.00%
Other	249	21.10%
TOTAL answers	1,182	100.00%

Table 5. Resources most used for learning something new online. Source: BizMOOC.

Despite the evolution of information and communication technology (ICT) over the last few decades, the data suggests face-to-face courses are still preferred over online courses. More than 70% of the sample prefer to use them for developing their professional skills for their current or future job role, whereas 60% of the sample opt for online courses. This suggests, at least partially, society is considering a blended use of both face-to-face and online courses for professional skills development.

When asked about preference for learning on one's own or with other people, almost 60% of the sample considers that the best way for them depends on the circumstances and on the content. Nevertheless, if they opt to learn on their own, online resources, online courses and video platforms are the sources of content preferred by the majority (see Table 6). Over 100 respondents also mention other sources of content for learning on their own, with scientific articles, blogs and journals being the most relevant ones followed by social media content.

	Value	%
Newspapers	217	18.20%
Books	929	77.90%
TV	144	12.10%
Radio	59	4.90%
Online sources, such as Wikipedia	824	69.10%
Video platforms, such as YouTube or Kahn	788	66.10%
Online courses	844	70.70%
Other	116	9.70%

Table 6. Sources preferred for learning alone. Source: BizMOOC.

Even though MOOCs were first introduced to the education/training system in 2008, over 55% of the sample have never used a MOOC. Under 40% of the sample are using MOOCs for acquiring new information/knowledge and new skills online. YouTube videos, tutorials recommended by specialists in the field and open training/content are the preferred options.

	New information/knowledge		New skills	
	Value	%	Value	%
YouTube videos according to the content needed	799	67.0%	784	66.1%
Specific tutorials recommended by specialist in the field	867	72.7%	813	68.5%
Open training/ open content	675	56.6%	697	58.8%
Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)	459	38.5%	419	35.3%

Table 7. Sources of acquiring new information/knowledge and skills online. Source: BizMOOC.

In terms of expectations, data suggest MOOCs provide a better understanding of an aspect related to a specific subject; to get low-cost or free opportunities for learning; and to have the most up-to-date information on a specific subject (see Table 8).

I expect a MOOC to allow me to…	Value	%
Better understand a detailed aspect related to the subject	703	58,9%
Get low-cost or free opportunities for learning	798	66,9%
Obtain knowledge from a well-known institution from abroad for free	646	54,1%
Have the most up-to-date information on a subject	705	59,1%
Provide a comprehensive overview of a specific subject from both academics and practitioners	636	53,3%
Encourage flexible thinking through innovative ways of learning	534	44,8%
Improve digital skills, creativity and flexibility	493	41,3%

Table 8. Expectations from MOOCs. Source: BizMOOC.

In respect of the perceived benefits of MOOCs, personal development which contributes to improved job performance, personal improvement, and the development of skills for a potential new job are those most highlighted by the respondents (see Table 9).

MOOCs will…	Value	%
Benefit my future career	537	45,0%
Facilitate new connections/networks	362	30,3%
Benefit my personal development allowing me to better perform in my current job	789	66,1%
Help me to develop skills for a new job	613	51,4%
Contribute to my personal improvement and leisure	654	54,8%
Not give any tangible benefit	65	5,4%

Table 9. Benefits of MOOCs for the society. Source: BizMOOC.

The elements of MOOCs most relevant for personal development according to our sample are depicted in Table 10. Data suggest that the low-cost or for free acquisition of new knowledge and skills is the most important aspect for people in relation to personal development. The fact that MOOCs are massive (open to a large number of participants) appears to be irrelevant as only 79 of respondents (out of 1,193) marked it as very important for personal development.

	1 (not important)	2	3	4	5 (very important)	Rating Average
Large numbers of participants	532	258	243	91	79	2,10
Accessed by anyone	149	120	197	288	462	3,65
No entry qualifications needed	123	145	302	297	330	3,44
A full/complete course experience	52	86	217	336	524	3,98
Complete online provision	37	57	228	350	526	4,06
Gratis/for free	33	51	178	317	635	4,21
Open licence to re-use parts of the course	60	71	203	367	509	3,99
Intercultural exchange	124	187	321	280	299	3,37
Exchange in/improve foreign language skills	96	139	271	331	370	3,62
Certificate of competences	77	92	200	281	399	3,80

Table 10. MOOC´s elements most relevant for personal development. Source: BizMOOC.

4.4. Interest in participating in the near future in MOOCs

Approximately 85% of respondents would participate in MOOCs sometimes or often if they were to have access to an online platform with courses designed for large numbers of participants that could be accessed by anyone anywhere as long as they had an internet connection, was open to everyone without entry prerequisites or qualifications, and offered a full/complete course experience online for free (see Table 11).

	Value	%
Often	302	37.5%
Sometimes	384	47.7%
Don´t know	110	13.7%
Never	9	1.1%

Table 11. Interest of using MOOCs. Source: BizMOOC.

The respondents identified the improvement of their skills and enhancement of knowledge on particular topic(s) as the main reasons for participating in MOOCs. This was followed by curiosity (see Table 12).

	Value	%
Entertainment	176	14.8%
Skills improvement	900	75.4%
Enhancing knowledge on particular topic/s	1,003	84.1%
Curiosity	576	48.3%
Other	45	3.8%
TOTAL	**1,193**	**100.0%**

Table 12. Reasons of using MOOCs by the respondents. Source: BizMOOC.

The BizMOOC project has committed to designing and producing three MOOCs that will be made openly available to learners. Each MOOC will cover one specific theme. More than 70% of the respondents are interested in participating in the MOOC on 'innovation, creativity and idea creation', whereas the MOOCs on 'learning to learn' and 'sense of initiative (entrepreneurship & intrapreneurship)' are considered by 51% and 42% respectively (see Table 13).

	Value	%
Learning to learn	618	51,8%
Sense of initiative (entrepreneurship & intrapreneurship)	503	42,2%
Innovation, creativity and idea creation	867	72,7%

Table 13. Interest in enrolling the MOOCs offered by BizMOOC.

5. Conclusions

While 84% of respondents currently use the web for developing their skills and/or to learn something new, around 40% are using MOOCs already and about 85% are planning to do so in the future. Thus, after more than half a decade of MOOCs trending, citizens across Europe still do not view MOOCs as mainstream. The reasons for this are varied: universities employ different methodologies, generational differences and a tendency toward more traditional training and personal development methods by some business communities and employers.

The first important sample observation was – particularly when referenced to existing research on the educational attainment of those who use MOOCs (Sharples et al., 2013; UNESCO, 2013; Ho et al., 2015; Online Course Report; 2016; etc.) – that employees and students between 18 and 55 years old with at least an undergraduate degree represent the majority of those surveyed.

Despite the drift towards modernising training and teaching/learning methods via the use of ICT, face-to-face courses were still preferred by survey participants. Yet, learners generally preferred a blended user setting of both face-to-face and online courses for professional skills development. Only in instances of independent or non-formal learning was there a small preference for online learning. Participants identified video platforms and online courses as the preferred formats for self-directed learning content with the most used resources being: YouTube videos, specific tutorials and open training/open content, scientific blogs and academic articles, Moodle platforms with specific content, licensed materials, Google Scholar, MOOCs and Social Media content.

Although our sample valued MOOC offering low-cost or free opportunities for learning and acquiring up-to-date

information on a specific subject, more than 55% have not yet used MOOCs. However, 85% of participants indicated that they were likely to use MOOCs regularly or occasionally, in future.

Regarding the main reasons for participating in MOOCs, improving skills and enhancing knowledge on a particular topic(s) were underlined – independently whether the respondents had previous experience in using MOOCs or not. Respondents with no previous MOOC experience highlighted curiosity as one of the main reasons for participating in MOOCs.

According to the respondents, the potential of MOOCs of improving personal development and the development of skills for a potential new job seem to be of high relevance when choosing this kind of informal education tool. The fact that MOOCs are massive (open to a large number of participants) appears to be irrelevant as less than 6.62% of the respondents marked it as very important for personal development.

Among the three MOOCs to be developed and offered by the BizMOOC project 'innovation, creativity and idea creation' was considered of interest to 70% of survey respondents. The other two MOOCs, 'learning to learn' and 'sense of initiative (entrepreneurship & intrapreneurship)', where considered of interest by 51% and 42% of the BizMOOC sample, respectively.

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Annex 1

Society Survey on Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC)_BizMOOC

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC)

BizMOOC - Knowledge Alliance to enable a European-wide exploitation of the potential of MOOCs for the world of business

Programme: Erasmus+ | Key Action 2 | Knowledge Alliances

Reference Number: 562286-EPP-1-2015-1-AT-EPPKA2-KA

This survey is using SurveyMonkey and any information you enter will be stored temporarily in the US. By taking part in the survey you are consenting to any information that can identify you as an individual being stored in this way.

All the information herby collected will be treated on the strictest confidentiality and no link between the information and options provided will be published or otherwise made available to the public.

The purpose of this survey is to identify needs, gaps & reasons for learners (esp. Labour force), businesses and universities to boost their Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) activities, which will result in guidelines, recommendations & good practice published in an interactive, open access MOOC BOOK. Based on this, 3 MOOCs focusing on LLL and business key competences "Learning to learn (through MOOCs)", "sense of initiative (entrepreneurship & intrapreneurship)" and "innovation, creativity & problem-solving" will be developed to test different methods & didactical approaches.

* 1. Please choose your country of origin from the following list

* 2. Please choose your country of residence from the following list

* 3. Please indicate your age group:

- ◯ Under 18
- ◯ 18-24
- ◯ 25-35
- ◯ 36-55
- ◯ 56-65
- ◯ Over 65

* 4. Please indicate your current education level:

- ◯ High School
- ◯ Bachelor
- ◯ Master
- ◯ PhD
- ◯ Other (please specify)

* 5. Please indicate your gender:

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Transgender
- ◯ Prefer not to say

* 6. Please indicate your employment status:

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Not able to work
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Other (please specify)

HOW YOU LEARN

* 7. How often do you use the web to develop your skills or to learn something new?

- ◯ Never
- ◯ Sometimes
- ◯ Often
- ◯ Always

8. If you haven´t used the web to learn something new before, would you consider doing so?

- ◯ Yes, often
- ◯ Yes, sometimes
- ◯ No, not at all

9. If you do use the web to learn something new, which resources do you use?

- ☐ Youtube videos according to the content needed
- ☐ Specific tutorials recommended by specialists in the field
- ☐ Open training/ open content
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* 10. How do you prefer to develop skills for your job, or a job you would like to have?

- ☐ Face-to-face courses
- ☐ Online courses

* 11. Do you prefer to learn on your own or with other people?

- ◯ On my own
- ◯ With other people
- ◯ It depends

* 12. If you had to learn something new on your own, which resources would you use?

- ☐ Newspapers
- ☐ Books
- ☐ TV
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Online sources, such as Wikipedia
- ☐ Video platforms, such as YouTube or Kahn
- ☐ Online courses
- ☐ Other (please specify)

MOOCs

Here is one definition of MOOC:

MOOCs are online courses designed for large numbers of participants, that can be accessed by anyone anywhere, as long as they have an internet connection; they are open to everyone without entry qualifications, and offer a full/complete course experience online for free.

* 13. Have you ever used a MOOC?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Other (please specify)

If you answered "NO"

14. If you had access to an online platform with courses designed for large numbers of participants, that could be accessed by anyone anywhere as long as they had an internet connection, was open to everyone without entry prerequisites or qualifications, and offered a full/complete course experience online for free, would you use it?

- ◯ Yes, often
- ◯ Yes, sometimes
- ◯ Don´t know
- ◯ No, never

* 15. For what reasons would you use these courses?

- ☐ Entertainment
- ☐ Skills improvement
- ☐ Enhancing knowledge on particular topic/s
- ☐ Curiosity
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* 16. How do you acquire new information/knowledge online?

- [ ] YouTube videos according to the content needed
- [ ] Specific tutorials recommended by specialist in the field
- [ ] Open training/ open content
- [ ] Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
- [ ] Other (please specify)

* 17. How do you achieve new skills online?

- [ ] YouTube videos according to the content needed
- [ ] Specific tutorials recommended by specialist in the field
- [ ] Open training/ open content
- [ ] Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
- [ ] Other (please specify)

* 18. What would be your expectations from MOOCs?

- [ ] To better understand a detailed aspect related to the subject
- [ ] To get low-cost or free opportunities for learning
- [ ] To obtain knowledge from a well-known institution from abroad for free
- [ ] To have the most up-to-date information on a subject
- [ ] To provide a comprehensive overview of a specific subject from both academics and practitioners
- [ ] To encourage flexible thinking through innovative ways of learning
- [ ] To improve digital skills, creativity and flexibility
- [ ] Other (please specify)

* 19. What do you think are the benefits of using MOOCs?

- [ ] It will benefit my future career
- [ ] It will facilitate new connections/networks
- [ ] It will benefit my personal development allowing me to better perform in my current job
- [ ] It will help me to develop skills for a new job
- [ ] It will contribute to my personal improvement and leisure
- [ ] It does not give any tangible benefit
- [ ] Other (please specify)

* 20. What elements of a MOOC do you feel would be most important for your personal development

	1 (not important)	2	3	4	5 (very important)
Large numbers of participants	○	○	○	○	○
Accessed by anyone	○	○	○	○	○
No entry qualifications needed	○	○	○	○	○
A full/complete course experience	○	○	○	○	○
Complete online provision	○	○	○	○	○
Gratis/for free	○	○	○	○	○
Open licence to re-use parts of the course	○	○	○	○	○
Intercultural exchange	○	○	○	○	○
Exchange in/improve foreign language skills	○	○	○	○	○
Certificate of competences	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

* 21. Would you consider enrolling on a MOOC in the following subject areas?

- [ ] Learning to learn
- [ ] Sense of initiative (entrepreneurship & intrapreneurship)
- [ ] Innovation, creativity and idea creation

CONTACT

* 22. Would you be interested in distributing BizMOOC survey to your internal and external network?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

23. If you answered "YES", please enter your e-mail address

24. We would like to include you in the BizMOOC mailing list in order to keep you updated about the project. If you agree to this contact, please provide your email address below.

Thank you for your willingness to participate and your contribution to the development of the guideline within this project framework!

All these will be carried out under the 'BizMOOC' project (1st Jan 2016 – 31st Dec 2018), a EU-funded project, which strives to support learners, businesses and universities to increase their MOOC activities For the specific purpose of this survey, you must provide us with certain data, i.e. origin country, residence country, email, etc. All personal data collected by the Project are processed and protected in accordance with the Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 and the related provisions of the Spanish Law 15/1999 on Personal Data Protection.

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