

Australian police to access US-based cloud data under a new reciprocal arrangement, government moves classified data to the cloud

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The Sydney Morning Herald reports that the Australian government is pushing for a deal with Washington that would allow Australian police to take a warrant directly to US tech companies and quickly access a suspect's data.

The arrangement could help Australian authorities get around the problem of accessing encrypted communications. While companies such as Apple cannot themselves always unlock data on their products such as iPhones, they are more easily able to decrypt data on cloud backups.

Australian police requests for data from US companies are usually rejected because of legal complications in the US regarding warrants for the cloud data. It is understood that the new agreement could overcome that obstacle.

Fairfax Media understands Law Enforcement and Cyber Security Minister Angus Taylor will visit the US in the next fortnight and will express Australia's eagerness to strike an agreement as soon as possible to allow each country's law enforcement agencies to more easily access data held in computer "cloud" on each other's soil.

A "cloud" is a group of networked elements such as computers, storage, software, and services hosted at geographically diverse locations allowing users to connect to it from anywhere. Cloud computing has been rapidly displacing traditional business-owned infrastructure (such as servers, backup devices, etc.)

The talks follow the recent passage of a law by the US Congress that enables American agencies such as the FBI to demand - with a warrant - access to data from US-based tech companies even if the companies are holding that data in overseas cloud services - a situation that is increasingly common.

As part of the new CLOUD Act, the Trump administration can sign individual agreements with other countries to make the arrangement reciprocal. Britain is reportedly the first country in line with the new rules but Fairfax Media understands Australia hopes to be among the next few.

Full story: [Police could access US cloud data under planned crime-fighting deal](#)

Government data moving to the cloud

Last week, Angus Taylor announced that data created and held by Australian federal government will be moved to the cloud. The data will be hosted by Microsoft in Australian data centres, subcontracting the company Canberra Data Centres for the storage.

Microsoft's Azure cloud services have received the green light to store federal government data classified at the Protected level.

The government's announcement "makes Microsoft the first, the only, global cloud provider to have been awarded Protected certification," said Microsoft Australia's Azure engineering lead, James Kavanagh.

Protected data is data that if its security is compromised it would have an impact on Australia's national security and can include a range of Defence and public safety data. Microsoft already had a range of Azure services certified for use with unclassified but sensitive data. The company estimates that,

combined, unclassified and Protected covers 85 to 90 per cent of government data.

Full Story: [Government gives Microsoft cloud greenlight to store classified data](#)

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