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Minister joked he didn't know what data protection was

THE minister with responsibility for data privacy told a conference for exporters that the first time he heard of the term data protection was as he was walking out of Taoiseach Enda Kenny's office after being given the portfolio.

Dara Murphy, who is Minister for European Affairs and Data Protection, made the off-the-cuff remark at a launch by the **Irish Exporters Association** (IEA) of a report into digital marketing.

"The first time I'd heard of data protection, it was when I was walking out of the Taoiseach's office after being made Minister for European Affairs. He said: 'By the way, you'll also be looking after data protection,'" said Mr Murphy.

A spokesperson for the minister said that he was "clearly

joking" and while he may have been "unaware that there might be a minister for data protection," he knew what it was.

Mr Murphy's comments came after an early speaker had told an anecdote about the first time he heard the word 'digital' – when a classmate in school got a digital watch.

Last month, Mr Murphy found himself at the centre of a political storm after accepting a garda escort from his constituency in Cork to Dublin Airport after his car broke down.

At the same event yesterday he made light of that incident. After the CEO of IEA Simon McKeever thanked the minister for getting up at 4am to travel to the event, Mr Murphy replied: "And my car didn't break down this time."