

Major Study Sheds Light on Online Security Values

CCIA

WASHINGTON — A new poll released by the Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA) found that Internet users are highly concerned about the theft of personal and financial information and believe strongly that the federal government should do more to protect them. This CCIA telephone survey of 1,000 voters was conducted by Benenson Strategy Group (D) and American Viewpoint (R) November 12-18, 2013.

“By wide margins this survey clearly shows that ID theft has touched the majority of consumers in some way, and that hacking is more worrisome to consumers than tracking, and that voters want the government to more aggressively go after cyber criminals,” said Ed Black, CCIA President and CEO. “Safeguarding users online must become a higher priority for companies and also for the regulators and policymakers charged with protecting consumers.”

“While many surveys ask people whether they care about privacy in the abstract, we were interested in finding out both how they rate security and privacy in comparison and how that manifests in their behaviors online,” said CCIA Policy and Regulatory Counsel Ross Schulman who explained why CCIA conducted the study. “Are they taking steps to protect their security and privacy? What information do they share online and why do they share it? The answers may help policymakers focus on the online concerns that matter most to citizens and understand user trends in everything from social media to online shopping.”

The survey found that on average, voters are 5 times more worried about hacking than tracking. 80% say they are more worried the information they share will be hacked to cause harm or steal from them while just 16% are more worried that companies will use the information they share online to target advertising to them.

Overall, 75% are worried about their personal information being stolen by hackers and 54% are worried about their browsing history being tracked for targeted advertising. However, when voters are forced to choose which one is more important to them their focus is almost unanimously (87%) directed on the need to protect their personal information from those who would use the info to harm them. Even those worried about tracking (the 54%) are more worried about hacking by an overwhelming majority (84% to 8%).

Voters are acutely aware of the threats to the security of their information and they strongly believe the federal government should go after hackers and thieves. 55% say they or someone they know had their email account breached and 62% report receiving a suspicious email from someone likely due to that person’s email being hacked. Importantly, 50% say they or someone they know had their financial

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accounts breached online.

This acute awareness of threats to the security of their information has resulted in strong sentiment for the government to take action to protect online security. Another 74% say the federal government needs to do more to prevent and act against identity theft, including a 56% majority of voters who say they feel strongly about this.

Most voters choose to actively share information online through a wide range of channels and, because they know the risks to their privacy, voters are active in taking steps to protect themselves. 73% have chosen to not allow a service to remember their credit card information; 65% have chosen to set their browser to disable cookies; 53% have chosen to block an app from accessing their location information.

Some 68% have adjusted the privacy settings for their online accounts but of those, just 2% say they did so because they don't want to see ads; only 7% say they haven't adjusted their privacy settings because they do not know how to do so.

According to the survey, most take steps to protect the security of their information. More than three in four (76%) survey respondents indicated they have used a different password for each service, and 57% have signed up for a two-step sign-in process. Also 83% have required a password to unlock their devices at some point.

The poll also shows that respondents have a lower level of concern about targeted online advertising as evidenced by the fact that most would rather have a free Internet with targeted advertising than a paid service but with no advertising. Twice as many say they prefer free online services supported by targeted ads (61%) over online services that they pay for but come with no targeted ads (33%).

Methodology

This research was conducted by Benenson Strategy Group and American Viewpoint. The interviews took place from November 12-18, 2013 and included 1,000 interviews with registered voters nationwide who use the Internet. All interviews were conducted over the telephone and included cell phone interviews. The margin of error for the entire data set is 3.02% at the 95% confidence level.

Computer & Communications Industry Association:

CCIA is an international nonprofit association representing a broad cross section of computer, communications and Internet industry firms. CCIA remains dedicated, as it has for over 40 years, to promoting innovation and preserving full, fair and open competition throughout our industry. Our members employ more than 600,000 workers and generate annual revenues in excess of \$200 billion.

Benenson Strategy Group

Benenson Strategy Group is a premier research consulting firm whose expertise

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revolves around message testing and positioning strategy for corporations, politicians and institutional clients. BSG strives to uncover the hidden architecture behind the attitudes and values that shape beliefs and decisions and use that knowledge to craft compelling messaging strategies. BSG has clients all over the country and the world, but the firm is perhaps most well-known for its work as Obama's pollster in 2008 and 2012 and continues to work for the White House today.

American Viewpoint

Since being founded in 1985 by Linda DiVall, American Viewpoint has become one of the most widely respected public opinion research firms in the country. American Viewpoint has a wide range of experience conducting research for corporate clients such as hospitals, insurance companies, telecommunications companies and non-profit organizations. Numerous corporations and organizations have also depended on American Viewpoint to help solve issues ranging from crisis management to brand development to membership satisfaction. American Viewpoint has served on the polling team of every Republican Presidential nominee since President Reagan and has helped elect countless U.S. Senators, Members of Congress, Governors and other elected officials across the country.

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