

MEDIA RELEASE

Public attitudes to data sharing cautious but shifting – Opinion survey results

9 May 2016

Approximately two-thirds (65%) of New Zealanders continue to be concerned about privacy. This result is statistically unchanged from previous surveys in 2014 and 2012. The public opinion survey, commissioned by the Privacy Commissioner, was released to mark the beginning of Privacy Week.

Nearly half of New Zealanders (46%) are *more concerned* about individual privacy issues over the last few years. This was particularly so for young people aged 18-29 years (55% more concerned), and those with university education (55%). “This sort of result tells us that we need to revisit the received wisdom that is out there about how younger people view privacy,” said Privacy Commissioner John Edwards.

Nearly all respondents (87%) were concerned about the personal information children upload to the internet.

A large majority of respondents (75-81%) were concerned about issues related to identity theft, credit card and banking details, businesses sharing personal information and security of information.

Respondents expressed a decreased level of concern about the way government (59% concerned) and health organisations (47% concerned) are sharing information. This represents a decrease of 8% and 6% from 2014 respectively.

Data sharing concerns

In a new part of the survey, respondents were asked about their attitudes to personal data being shared between organisations.

A majority (62%) felt “*We should not share data as the risks to people’s privacy and security outweighs the benefits*”, while 38% had a view closer to “*We should share all the data we can because it benefits the services and me.*”

Significantly, respondents were more open to data sharing when safeguards were put in place. A majority were willing to share data as long as *they could opt out if they chose (57%); there were strict controls on who can access the data and how it is used (59%), and data is anonymised and they couldn’t be identified (61%)*. “These results send a clear message that data sharing is a potentially divisive issue for the community, and having the

right safeguards in place significantly increases people's willingness to have their data shared", said Mr Edwards.

What personal information is sensitive?

A large majority of respondents (80%) were sensitive about the content of personal phone conversations or email messages.

A smaller majority of New Zealanders were sensitive about personal earnings (66%), health information (65%), physical location (63%) and websites visited (54%).

Respondents were less sensitive to purchasing habits (42%), birth date (39%) and political and religious views (38%) and (31%) respectively.

The Privacy Commissioner commissioned UMR research to survey New Zealanders 18 years and over. Previous surveys are available on the Office of the Privacy Commissioner's website at <https://www.privacy.org.nz/news-and-publications/surveys/>

For more information or to interview John Edwards, please contact Sam Grover on 021 509 735.

ENDS

Notes for editors:

Section A (Data privacy concerns) and B (Privacy Commissioner awareness ratings):

- > Results are based upon questions asked in UMR Research's nation-wide omnibus survey. This is a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of 751 New Zealanders 18 years of age and over.
- > The survey was conducted from 31st March to 6th April 2016.
- > The margin of error for a 50% figure at the 95% confidence level for a sample of n=751 is approximately $\pm 3.6\%$.

Section C (Data sharing concerns), D (Sharing data, sensitive information and willingness to share) and E (Data portability):

- > Results are based upon questions asked in UMR Research's SayIT nation-wide online omnibus survey. This is a survey of a nationally representative sample of 1000 New Zealanders 18 years of age and over.
- > The survey was conducted from 30th March to 18th April 2016.
- > The margin of error for a 50% figure at the 95% confidence level for a sample of n=1000 is approximately $\pm 3.1\%$.

Privacy Week

Privacy Week is an annual week marked throughout the Asia-Pacific region in May. See: <http://www.appaforum.org/paw/>

New Zealand's Privacy Week activities include:

- Visit of the first UN Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy – Prof. Joe Cannataci
- Wellington Privacy Forum – 11 May, Intercontinental Hotel
- Auckland Privacy Forum – 12 May, Crowne Plaza Hotel
- Technology & Privacy Forums, 9 and 10 May, Wellesley Hotel, Wellington
- Release of 'mystery shopper' report into credit reporters
- New Zealand's first "Right to Know Day", 12 May
- Launch of "AboutMe" – and online tool for personal information requests

For more details and information about what is happening during the week see:

www.privacy.org.nz