

Two thirds of Internet users hit by cybercrime: Norton

September 8 2010

Computer security firm Symantec on Wednesday reported that about two thirds of the world's Internet users have fallen victim to cybercrime and few think crooks will be caught.

China was tops when it came to online victims, with 83 percent of [Internet users](#) there having been hit by computer viruses, identity theft, online [credit card fraud](#) or other crimes, according to a Norton Cybercrime Report.

Brazil and India were tied for second place with 76 percent, while the United States was next in line with 73 percent.

While victims admitted to feeling furious and cheated, they were reluctant to take action because they felt efforts would be futile, according to a study by [Symantec](#) consumer division Norton.

Reporting cybercrime is critical, because some times larger patterns can be pieced together by police fielding reports that, individually, appear minor.

"Cybercriminals purposely steal small amounts to remain undetected, but all of these add up," said Adam Palmer, Norton lead [cyber security](#) advisor.

"If you fail to report a loss, you may actually be helping the criminal stay under the radar."

A tendency by people to accept cybercrime was in part due to "learned helplessness," according to Joseph LaBrie, an associate professor of psychology at Loyola Marymount University.

"It's like getting ripped off at a garage -- if you don't know enough about cars, you don't argue with the mechanic," LaBrie said. "People just accept a situation, even if it feels bad."

The study revealed some moral gray zones; nearly half of those interviewed thought it was legal to download a single digital CD or movie without paying.

Some 24 percent of those surveyed saw nothing wrong with secretly reading someone else's email messages or Web browsing history.

"People resist protecting themselves and their computers because they think it's too complicated," said Anne Collier, co-director of ConnectSafely.org, a US non-profit group that collaborated with Norton on the study.

"But everyone can take simple steps, such as having up-to-date, comprehensive security software in place. In the case of online crime, an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure."

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Citation: Two thirds of Internet users hit by cybercrime: Norton (2010, September 8) retrieved 9 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-09-thirds-internet-users-cybercrime-norton.html>

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