

Study: Risky online behavior common

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(AP) -- Big companies such as Citigroup and Sony have been the targets of major hacking attacks. Yet a new survey finds that regular people are also prime and often unsuspecting targets.

Parents and their teenage children regularly engage in risky online behavior, according to the survey of U.S. [Internet users](#) commissioned by [computer](#) security company GFI Software.

More than half of the parents whose home computers have been infected with a virus said this has happened more than once. And while 89 percent of parents said they have antivirus software on their computers, a quarter of them said they don't know if they update it. Without updates, antivirus software is useless against the latest malicious attacks.

Of the teens who responded, 24 percent said they have visited a website meant for adults. More than half who do so said they lied about their age to get into the sites. Such sites are often designed to spread [malicious software](#), which can infect the computers of people who visit.

"Given the potential ramifications of improper [Internet use](#) today, it would seem to merit at least the same degree of educational [vigilance](#) as other lifestyle risk categories like sex, drugs and alcohol," the report said.

The survey of 1,070 adults and their teenage children was conducted March 22 to April 5, 2011 and had a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

Among the survey's other findings:

- 11 percent of teens said they have been bullied online or by text messages. More girls reported being bullied than boys.
- 79 percent of teens said they own a mobile phone. Of this group, 29 percent said they own a smartphone.
- 76 percent of parents and 77 percent of teenagers said they are very confident or somewhat confident that their computers won't be infected by a virus.
- 65 percent of parents said their home computers have been infected.
- More than half of the households said both the parent and the teen had a Facebook account. Of these, 87 percent were "friends" with each other on the site.
- 83 percent of teenagers with Facebook accounts indicated that they understand how to use privacy settings, so they may hide content from their parents.

More information: Online:

<http://www.gfi.com/parent-teen-internet-safety-report>

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