

Hacking fears outweigh privacy concerns, US survey finds

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In this file photo, a student from an engineering school is pictured during a 'hacking challenge' in Meudon, west of Paris, on March 16, 2013

US Internet users are far more worried about computer hacking and theft of personal information than about online privacy and tracking by marketers, a poll showed on Friday.

The survey conducted for the Computer & Communications Industry

Association found that Internet users are most concerned about the theft of personal and [financial information](#) and believe that the federal government should do more to protect them.

When the respondents were asked, "Which generally worries you more?" 80 percent said becoming the victim of hacking or online theft, while 16 percent were more worried that companies will use the information they share online to target advertising to them.

"By wide margins this survey clearly shows that identity 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, president and chief executive of the tech trade association.

"Safeguarding [users](#) online must become a higher priority for companies and also for the regulators and policymakers charged with protecting consumers."

The survey found 75 percent of respondent were worried about their personal information being stolen by hackers and 54 percent about their browsing history being tracked for targeted advertising.

However, when asked to choose which one is more important to them, 87 percent mentioned the need to protect their [personal information](#) from criminals.

More than half—55 percent—said they or someone they know had their email account breached and 50 percent said they or someone they know had their financial accounts breached online.

Nearly three out of four respondents said they opted not to allow a service to remember their credit card information; 65 percent have

chosen to set their browser to disable cookies that identify them; and 53 percent have chosen to block an app from accessing their location information.

The [poll](#) showed lesser concerns about targeted online advertising: 61 percent said they preferred free online services supported by targeted ads compared with 33 percent who said they would pay for online services that have no targeted ads.

Some 1,000 adults were interviewed by Benenson Strategy Group and American Viewpoint from November 12-18 for the survey, with a margin of error estimated at 3.02 percentage points.

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