Cyber Security tops the list of concerns for Internet users in Asia-Pacific

Internet Society survey highlights a wide range of online fears

[Singapore, 26 July 2017] – The Internet Society today released the findings from its annual Survey on Internet Policy Issues in Asia-Pacific. The findings show that cyber security is now the top concern for Internet users in the region, followed by access, data protection, connectivity and privacy. The concerns brought to light by the survey highlight the fears people now have when going online.

Over 2,000 people from 40 economies across Asia-Pacific responded to the survey, which takes an in-depth look at how Internet users handle personal information online.

Key Findings:
- Cyber security topped the list of Internet users' key concerns.
- Without sufficient online data protection, 50% of women and 40% of men said that they were highly unlikely to use online banking and financial services, and approximately 40% of women and men were highly unlikely to use e-commerce sites and online shops.
- Over 70% of respondents felt that their personal information was not sufficiently protected online. Yet, close to 60% of respondents believed that they did not have sufficient knowledge and tools to protect their privacy online.
- Both women (91%) and men (89%) were either very uncomfortable or uncomfortable with disclosing bank and credit card details online.

"As Internet use in Asia-Pacific continues to skyrocket, it's crucial that Internet users, organizations, governments and other stakeholders understand the challenges that the region faces. The survey results underscore the need for both the public and the private sectors to not only build robust and secure networks and systems, but also to develop tools that equip users with the knowledge and skills to use these services safely online. These actions will help increase their confidence in using online services, and their trust in the Internet," explains Rajnesh Singh, Regional Bureau Director, Asia-Pacific, Internet Society.

Cyber Security:
Cyber security rose to the top of this year's survey, up from last year's second-place, when access was the number one concern. In 2016, existing laws were revised and new ones established relating to cyber security and data protection in countries throughout the region, most notably in China, South Korea and Indonesia.

Over 60% of users were aware of Internet-related policies, regulations or laws enacted by their national government in the past year. According to survey participants, these mainly sought to address cyber security, cybercrime, access, privacy and data protection—the same issues that were top of mind for them.

A majority of the respondents (63% of women and 72% of men) strongly agreed or agreed that the Internet became a more regulated space in the past year. A number of respondents expressed concern for the following issues:

- The need to regulate fake news
- Increased surveillance that violates privacy rights
- Increased censorship and blocking of sites that affects freedom of expression
- The lack of online child protection

Internet Trust:
Most Internet users do not feel that their personal information is protected online and hesitate to use services that don't have privacy guarantees. These concerns have important implications on the rollout and use of not only commercial, but also public and social services online.

More than half (55%) of respondents indicated that they were either highly unlikely or unlikely to use online services if there were no guarantees that their personal information would be fully protected. Without sufficient online data protection, 50% of women and 40% of men said that they were highly unlikely to use online banking and financial services, and about 40% of the women and men were highly unlikely to use e-commerce sites and online shops.

Online privacy:
Over 70% of respondents felt that their personal information was not sufficiently protected online. Yet, close to 60% of the respondents believed that they did not have sufficient knowledge and tools to protect their privacy online.

A majority of Internet users (90%) were very uncomfortable or uncomfortable with providing bank and credit card details online. A larger percentage of the population in the Asia-Pacific region trusted traditional services such as banks, public authorities and health institutions, but had less trust in strictly online service providers.

"Users want to be informed, and need to have a certain level of control over the collection and use of their personal information. Public and private organizations that collect and share user information need to take this into account when formulating or updating privacy frameworks. This is also relevant for governments in the region as they start to consider new provisions such as the 'right to be forgotten' as well as pursue digital transformation initiatives," added Singh.

For the full survey please visit: https://www.internetsociety.org/doc/APACSurvey.

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About the Internet Society
Founded by Internet pioneers, the Internet Society (ISOC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring the open development, evolution, and use of the Internet. Working through a global community of chapters and members, the Internet Society collaborates with a broad range of groups to promote the technologies that keep the Internet safe and secure, and advocates for policies that enable universal access. The Internet Society is also the organizational home of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF).