# Concerns Over Privacy and Security Contribute to Consumer Distrust in Connected Devices

*New research shows privacy, security are frequently key consumer concerns and drive buying decisions*

*73% of consumers think people using connected devices should worry about eavesdropping, and 63% think connected devices are "creepy" in the way they collect data about people and their behaviors*

**Lisbon, Portugal – May 1, 2019** – A survey conducted in the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, France and the United Kingdom by IPSOS Mori on behalf of the Internet Society and Consumers International found that 65% of consumers are concerned with the way connected devices collect data. More than half (55%) do not trust their connected devices[1] to protect their privacy and a similar proportion (53%) do not trust connected devices to handle their information responsibly.

The results of the survey were announced today at Consumers International Summit 2019 in Lisbon, Portugal, to an audience of consumer organizations from around the globe working together with representatives from business, civil society, and governments.

Connected devices are everywhere and many people are willing to be part of the Internet of Things (IoT) revolution. 69% of those surveyed said they own connected devices, such as smart meters, fitness monitors, connected toys, home assistants, or gaming consoles.

However, testing by multiple consumers organizations has found a range of products are rushed to market with little consideration for basic security and privacy protections[2]. The survey results show that 77% of consumers across markets said information about privacy and security are important considerations in their buying decisions and almost a third of people

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[1] For this research, we defined smart devices as everyday products and devices that can connect to the Internet using Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, such as smart meters, fitness monitors, connected toys, home assistants, or gaming consoles. The definition excluded tablets, mobile phones, and laptops.

[2] For example: https://www.forbrukerradet.no/side/significant-security-flaws-in-smartwatches-for-children/ https://www.forbrukerradet.no/siste-nytt/connected-toys-violate-consumer-laws/ https://www.consumerreports.org/televisions/samsung-roku-smart-tvs-vulnerable-to-hacking-consumer-reports-finds/

(28%) who don't own a connected device don't buy smart products because of these concerns. Consumers see this broadly as much of a barrier as cost.

"The survey results underscore the need for IoT manufacturers to build their devices with security and privacy in mind," said Internet Society President and CEO Andrew Sullivan. "Security should not be an afterthought. It's clear that manufacturers and retailers need to do more so that consumers can trust their IoT devices."

Those surveyed also believe that accountability for connected device concerns should sit with regulators, manufacturers and retailers. 88% percent of survey respondents said that regulators should ensure IoT privacy and security standards, while 81% of people said manufacturers need to provide that assurance, and 80% said retailers must address privacy and security. 60% of participants across markets think consumers to be mainly responsible for the security and privacy of their connected devices.

Helena Leurent, Director General, Consumers International said: "Consumers have told us they accept that they have some responsibility for the security and privacy of their IoT products but that isn't the end of the story. They, and we, want to see tangible action from manufacturers, retailers, and governments on this issue. It has to be a collective effort, not the responsibility of one group. We are exploring this conversation with progressive manufacturers. Together we are looking at the opportunity to create person-centered technology, that people not only enjoy using, but feel safe and secure doing so. By doing this business can address the concerns of those not engaging with this tech, and open up the benefits of the Internet of Things to everyone."

Other key results from survey participants show that:

- 85% of Brits agree that manufacturers should only produce connected devices that protect privacy and security

- 86% of Brits agree that retailers should ensure the connected devices they sell have good privacy and security standards

- 59% of Brits who actually own connected devices agree that they are "creepy" in the way they collect data about people and their behaviors.

An infographic with the survey highlights can be downloaded at: https://www.internetsociety.org/iot/trust-by-design/infographics/.


**Notes to Editors**

In 2018, the Internet Society and Consumers International formed a working partnership aimed at creating a safer, more trusted Internet for everyone. The organizations collaborate on a wide range of initiatives engaging consumers, governments, regulators, and businesses on the importance of secure and trusted consumer IoT devices.  For tips and information on what consumers can do to protect themselves, please visit:  https://www.connect-smart.org/.

## About the Internet Society

Founded by Internet pioneers, the Internet Society 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).  For more information, visit www.internetsociety.org.

## About Consumers International

Consumers International is the global membership organisation for consumer groups across the world. We believe in a world where everyone has access to safe and sustainable products and services. We bring together over 200 member organisations in more than 100 countries to empower and champion the rights of consumers everywhere. We are their voice in international policy-making forums and the global marketplace to ensure they are treated safely, fairly and honestly. We are resolutely independent, unconstrained by businesses or political parties. We work on issues that impact consumers in the digital era including e-commerce, data privacy and security, the Internet of Things, affordability, and access. We want consumers to get the best out of the digital economy and society without having to compromise on quality, care and fair treatment.

**About the Survey**

1. Interviews were conducted online by Ipsos MORI among a representative quota sample in six countries (1000 adults aged 18-65 in Australia, 1072 adults aged 18-75 in Canada, 1094 adults aged 16-75 in France, 1000 adults aged 18-65 in Japan, 1130 adults aged 16-75 in the UK, and 1085 adults aged 18-75 in USA). The data was collected between 1st March and 6th March 2019 and have been weighted to the known profile of the respective population.

2. The 'overall' figures quoted are derived from aggregating the percentages for each market, weighted by population numbers in the respective countries. The number for any specific market may be higher or lower than the total percentage.

3. Full question wording for each of the questions referred to in this release is given in the accompanying "topline" results document.

4. The survey was conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Consumers International and the Internet Society.

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