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# Connect Smart:

## Understanding public perceptions toward cyber security

Executive summary of consumer research

June 2014

## Background

As part of its Connect Smart initiative, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) undertook research to better understand the attitudes and behaviours of New Zealanders toward cyber security.

Independent research agency Perceptive was commissioned to complete this research and to develop segmented consumer groups based on the insights and trends identified. The results have been used to inform communications and the development of consumer engagement tools to support the Connect Smart campaign.

Research involved a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and was completed in April 2014. A series of focus groups was run to generate qualitative insights that were then fed into a quantitative survey. The survey comprised more than 1100 responses, across a range of age groups and genders, as well as frequency of technology and internet use. The sample has been further weighed to match New Zealand Statistics Census Data.

This report summarises the findings of that research.

## Summary of results

### **Most New Zealanders are unresponsive to cyber security breaches**

Results showed that although the New Zealand population likes to engage heavily with technology, we are often lax when it comes to our cyber security. More than eight out of ten Kiwis (83%) have personally experienced some sort of cyber security breach and almost two thirds (61%) of those say they have not changed their online behaviour as a result.

20% of Kiwis believe that cyber security breaches are a way of life and can't be avoided and 26% of Kiwis don't believe they are personally at risk of cyber attacks, despite understanding that they are a real threat.

Asked about the type of cyber security breach they have experienced:

- 22% have had their emails hacked
- 21% had viruses that damaged or deleted information on personal device
- 12% have had their credit card details misused
- 25% have clicked a malicious link
- 27% have had someone send spam from their account to contacts; and
- 17% have had Facebook or other social media profile hacked

### **The majority of Kiwis rarely change their online passwords**

While Kiwis are very good at ensuring their online accounts are password protected and more than one in ten (14%) say they regularly change their passwords, two-fifths never or hardly ever change these passwords (40%), with a further 43% of people saying they only occasionally changed these.

64% of Kiwis only change their password when prompted by the site or platform.

Asked about the range of online passwords they use:

- 44% of Kiwis use less than three unique passwords for all their platforms
- 13% of Kiwis have a different password for every platform they use
- 6% of Kiwis have one password for everything
- 28% of Kiwis have more complex passwords for more important platforms (banking etc); and
- 11% of Kiwis never change their passwords

### **People are leaving themselves – and their employers – exposed due to relaxed device security**

Kiwis seem to be more concerned with the security of their personal smartphones and devices over work tools. Two thirds (66%) secure their personal smartphone with a password, but only half (52%) secure their work smartphone with a password or pin.

Even more worrying, more than half (58%) of people say they share devices – including work laptops and mobile devices – with others, meaning others potentially have access to sensitive company information.

Asked about their unsecured devices:

- 28% of people admit to leaving their laptop, PC or smartphone lying around unlocked
- 26% of those with unsecured devices use them to store other important pins or passwords
- 16% have passwords or pins stored on that device
- 44% of those without a password have apps that are automatically signed in on their device, for example Facebook, Twitter or Email

### **Kiwis tend to be cautious when transacting online**

When it comes to online transactions, many New Zealanders are aware of the need to ensure a site is secure before providing personal or financial details and proactively take steps to check this.

Only 3% of people say that they would go ahead and use a site without checking any of the site's security settings or processes.

When asked about what they would do to check a site is trustworthy:

- 67% of Kiwis would check a website had a secure payment platform before using it
- 49% of Kiwis would only use a transactional website if it looked professional and not dodgy
- 31% of Kiwis would Google a transactional website for reviews before using it; and
- 31% of Kiwis would only use a transactional website if friends or family had used it successfully

## **New Zealanders want to find out more about cyber security prevention**

Almost one in five Kiwis (18%) say that they find the topic of cyber security overwhelming. Most New Zealanders are interested in finding out more about the prevention and identification of a cyber security risk, with nearly three quarters (73%) of people saying they'd like to receive proactive advice on the subject.

Only just over a quarter (28%) of people say that they are currently aware of organisations that provide information on cyber security.

When asked where they would go to get more information about a cyber security breach:

- 65% would seek help from Google
- 40% would seek help from a computer expert or retailer
- 26% would be confident to deal with it themselves
- 4% wouldn't know what to do or where to get help.