


Many People Feel They Lack Control Over Their Personal Data

Article



With **data breaches a constant** worry, many consumers don't feel too confident in being able to control how their personal data gets used.

According to a July 2018 survey by **Mobile Ecosystem Forum** of 6,500 smartphone users worldwide ages 16 and older, just 27% of respondents felt they had some control over how

their personal data is used by mobile apps and services. Another 36% of respondents felt they didn't have a choice in how apps could use their data.

Do Smartphone Users Worldwide* Feel They Are in Control of Their Personal Data Used by Mobile Apps and Services?

% of respondents, July 2018

Feel in control, I am asked for permission and make a conscious choice about how my data is used

13%

Feel I have some choice about my data some of the time

14%

I know that by agreeing to the terms and conditions I am giving permission for them to use my personal data, but I don't feel I have a choice

36%

Know my personal data is being collected but I am never asked for permission

12%

I didn't know apps and services make use of my personal data

14%

None of the above

12%

Note: n=6,500 ages 16+; *Brazil, France, Germany, India, Japan, Poland, Spain, South Africa, the UK and the US
Source: Mobile Ecosystem Forum, "Global Consumer Trust Report 2018," Nov 20, 2018

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A May 2018 poll of 1,000 US adults by ExpressVPN also found that consumers are skeptical when it comes to data privacy. In that study, **71% of respondents said they were concerned** about how marketers collect and utilize their personal data.

Consumer advocates believe that data privacy laws **should be overhauled**. In an April 2018 poll of US internet users by Janrain, 68% of US internet users said they would **support rules like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the US**. The GDPR is an EU law which stipulates that a user's data can only be used if they give a company their explicit permission.

To put these data points in perspective, it is worth recognizing that those who agree to fill out surveys about personal data usage are self-selected and likely care more about this topic than the average person. Another caveat is that consumers' actions don't always reflect the concerns that consumer groups profess to care about. For instance, the **#DeleteFacebook movement gained traction** after Facebook had several scandals. However, most people aren't deleting Facebook. eMarketer forecasts that the number of people who use Facebook per month in the US will grow from 166.2 million people in 2016 to 169.5 million people in 2018.

Nonetheless, the research from Mobile Ecosystem Forum, ExpressVPN and Janrain, indicates that many internet users are fed up with how their data is being utilized online.