Pew Research Center

How Americans View Data Privacy

The role of technology companies, AI and regulation – plus personal experiences with data breaches, passwords, cybersecurity and privacy policies

BY *Colleen McClain, Michelle Faverio, Monica Anderson and Eugenie Park*

About Pew Research Center

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How we did this

Pew Research Center has a long record of studying Americans' views of privacy and their personal data, as well as their online habits. This study sought to understand how people think about each of these things – and what, if anything, they do to manage their privacy online.

This survey was conducted among 5,101 U.S. adults from May 15 to 21, 2023. Everyone who took part in the survey is a member of the Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This way nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race and ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the ATP's methodology.

Here are the questions used for this analysis, along with responses, and its methodology.

How Americans View Data Privacy

The role of technology companies, AI and regulation – plus personal experiences with data breaches, passwords, cybersecurity and privacy policies
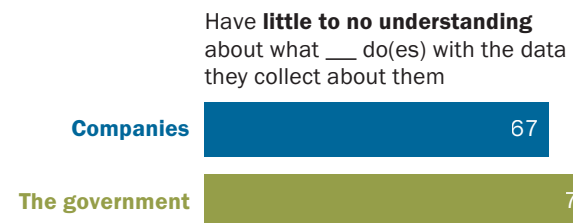
In an era where every click, tap or keystroke leaves a digital trail, Americans remain uneasy and uncertain about their personal data and feel they have little control over how it's used.

This wariness is even ticking up in some areas like government data collection, according to a new Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.

Today, as in the past, most Americans are concerned about how companies and the government use their information. But there have been some changes in recent years:

Americans are largely concerned and confused about how their data is being used

% of U.S. adults who say they ...

Are **concerned** about how ___ use(s) the data they collect about them

Companies	81
The government	71

Have **little to no understanding** about what ___ do(es) with the data they collect about them

Companies	67
The government	77

Note: "Very/somewhat concerned" are combined above. Respondents could also say they were not too or not at all concerned. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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Americans – particularly Republicans – have grown more concerned about how the government uses their data. The share who say they are worried about government use of people's data has increased from 64% in 2019 to 71% today. That reflects rising concern among Republicans (from 63% to 77%), while Democrats' concern has held steady. (Each group includes those who lean toward the respective party.)

The public increasingly says they don't understand what companies are doing with their data. Some 67% say they understand little to nothing about what companies are doing with their personal data, up from 59%.

Growing shares of Republicans say they're worried about how the government uses their personal data

*% of U.S. adults who say they are **very or somewhat concerned** about how the government is using the data it collects about them*

Note: Respondents could also say they were not too or not at all concerned. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
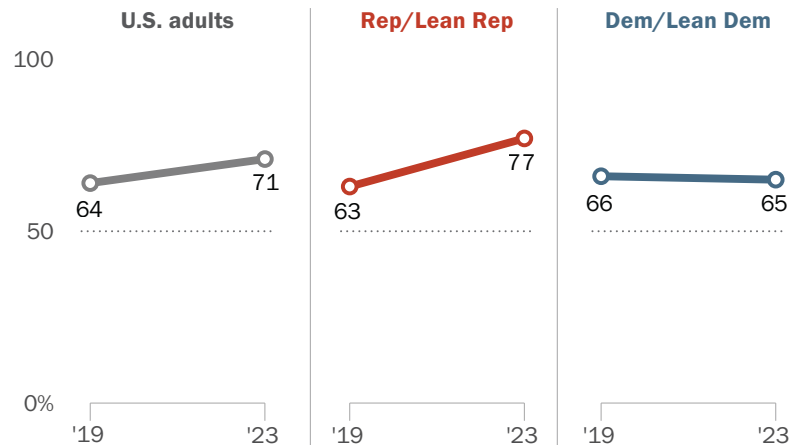"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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Most believe they have little to no control over what companies or the government do with their data. While these shares have ticked down compared with 2019, vast majorities feel this way about data collected by companies (73%) and the government (79%).

We've studied Americans' views on data privacy for years. The topic remains in the national spotlight today, and it's particularly relevant given the policy debates ranging from regulating AI to protecting kids on social media. But these are far from abstract concepts. They play out in the day-to-day lives of Americans in the passwords they choose, the privacy policies they agree to and the tactics they take – or not – to secure their personal information. We surveyed 5,101 U.S. adults using Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel to give voice to people's views and experiences on these topics.

In addition to the key findings covered on this page, the three chapters of this report provide more detail on:

Role of social media, tech companies and government regulation

Trust in social media CEOs

Americans have little faith that social media executives will responsibly handle user privacy.

Some 77% of Americans have little or no trust in leaders of social media companies to publicly admit mistakes and take responsibility for data misuse.

And they are no more optimistic about the government's ability to rein them in: 71% have little to no trust that these tech leaders will be held accountable by the government for data missteps.

Artificial intelligence

People's views on artificial intelligence (AI) are marked with distrust and worry about their data.

Most Americans don't trust social media CEOs to handle users' data responsibly

*% of U.S. adults who say they have **very little or no trust at all** that leaders of social media companies will …*

Publicly admit mistakes and take responsibility when they misuse or compromise users' personal data	**77%**
Not sell users' personal data to others without their consent	**76%**
Be held accountable by the government if they misuse or compromise users' personal data	**71%**

Note: Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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As AI raises new frontiers in how people's data is being used, unease is high. Among those who've heard about AI, 70% have little to no trust in companies to make responsible decisions about how they use it in their products.

And about eight-in-ten of those familiar with AI say its use by companies will lead to people's personal information being used in ways they won't be comfortable with (81%) or that weren't originally intended (80%).

Still, there's some positivity: 62% of Americans who've heard of AI think that as companies use it, people's information will be used to make life easier.

The public expects AI's role in data collection to lead to unintended consequences and public discomfort

*Among those who have heard of artificial intelligence, % who say that as companies use AI to collect and analyze personal information, this information **will** be used in ways that …*

People would not be comfortable with	81
Were not originally intended	80
Could make people's lives easier	62

Note: "Definitely/probably will happen" are combined. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Children's online privacy

Americans worry about kids' online privacy – but largely expect parents to take responsibility. Some 89% are very or somewhat concerned about social media platforms knowing personal information about kids. Large shares also worry about advertisers and online games or gaming apps using kids' data. And while most Americans (85%) say parents hold a great deal of responsibility for protecting kids' online privacy, 59% also say this about tech companies and 46% about the government.

Government regulation

There is bipartisan support for more regulation of what companies can do with people's data. Some 72% of Americans say there should be more regulation than there is now; just 7% say there should be less. Support for more regulation reaches across the political aisle, with 78% of Democrats and 68% of Republicans taking this stance.

Americans' day-to-day experiences with online privacy

Americans' day-to-day experiences reflect the difficulty of managing your privacy, even amid widespread concern. Some people are overwhelmed navigating the options tech companies provide or skeptical these steps will make a difference. And at times, people fail to take steps to safeguard their data.

Feelings about managing online privacy

Americans' feelings about managing their online privacy range from confident to overwhelmed. Most Americans (78%) trust themselves to make the right decisions about their personal information.

But a majority say they're skeptical anything they do will make much difference. And only about one-in-five are confident that those who have their personal information will treat it responsibly.

How people approach privacy policies

Privacy policies used by apps, websites and other online services allow users to review and consent to what is being done with their data.

But many say privacy policies' long and technical nature can limit their usefulness – and that consumers lack meaningful choices.

Many trust themselves to make the right privacy decisions but are also skeptical their actions matter

% of U.S. adults who say that when they think about managing their privacy online, they ...
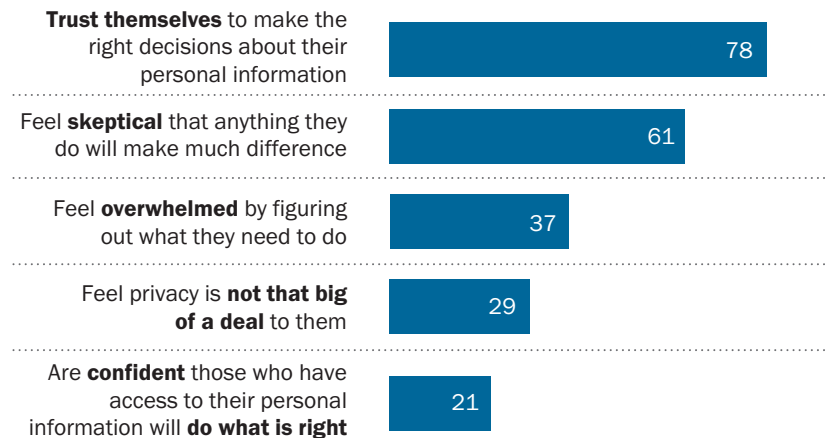
Trust themselves to make the right decisions about their personal information	78
Feel **skeptical** that anything they do will make much difference	61
Feel **overwhelmed** by figuring out what they need to do	37
Feel privacy is **not that big of a deal** to them	29
Are **confident** those who have access to their personal information will **do what is right**	21

Note: Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Our survey finds that a majority of Americans ignore privacy policies altogether: 56% frequently click "agree" without actually reading their content.

People are also largely skeptical that privacy policies do what they're intended to do. Some 61% think they're ineffective at explaining how companies use people's data. And 69% say they view these policies as just something to get past.

Password overload

From social media accounts to mobile banking and streaming services, Americans must keep track of numerous passwords. This can leave many feeling fatigued, resigned and even anxious.

Nearly 6 in 10 Americans frequently skip reading privacy policies

% of U.S. adults who say they ___ agree to online privacy policies right away, without reading what the policies say
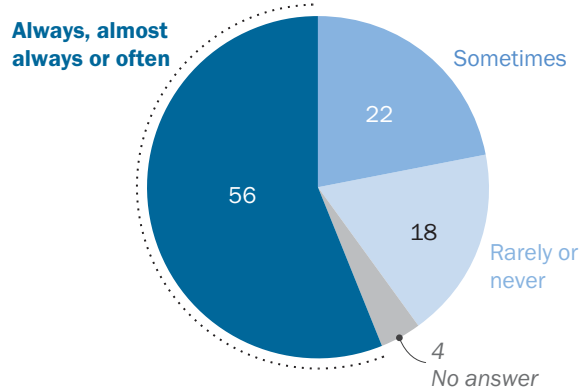
Note: Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding. "No answer" includes those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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This survey finds about seven-in-ten Americans (69%) are overwhelmed by the number of passwords they have to keep track of. And nearly half (45%) report feeling anxious about whether their passwords are strong and secure.

But despite these concerns, only half of adults say they typically choose passwords that are more secure, even if they are harder to remember. A slightly smaller share opts for passwords that are easier to remember, even if they are less secure.
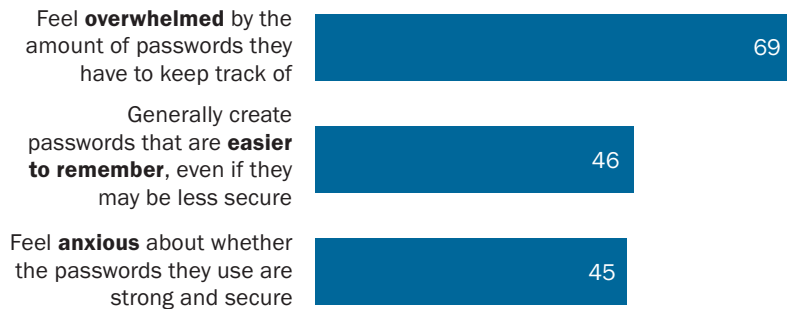
Password management

The public is adopting a range of strategies for managing their passwords.

Some 41% of Americans say they always, almost always or often write down their passwords. A slightly smaller share (34%) save their passwords in their browser with the same frequency. And 21% regularly reset the passwords to their online accounts.

These tactics vary across age groups. Some 63% of Americans ages 65 and older

Many Americans are overwhelmed by keeping up with passwords – and nearly half forgo secure ones

% of U.S. adults who say they ...

Feel **overwhelmed** by the amount of passwords they have to keep track of	69
Generally create passwords that are **easier to remember**, even if they may be less secure	46
Feel **anxious** about whether the passwords they use are strong and secure	45

Note: Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Writing, saving or resetting? How people keep track of their passwords varies by age

*% of U.S. adults who say they **always, almost always or often** do each of the following as they access their different online accounts*

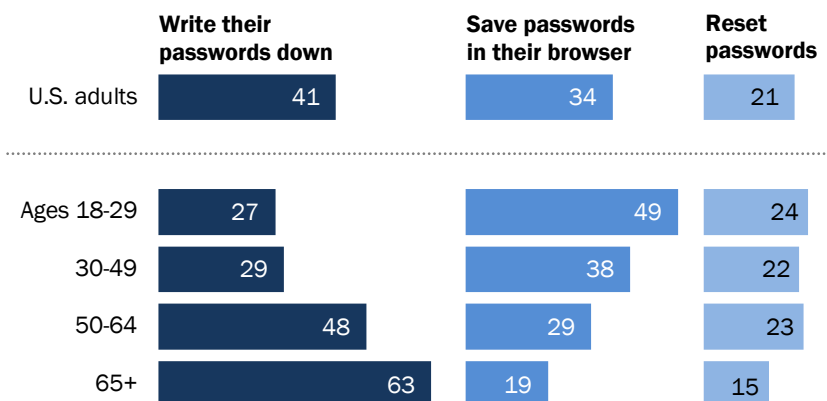|	Write their passwords down	Save passwords in their browser	Reset passwords
U.S. adults	41	34	21
Ages 18-29	27	49	24
30-49	29	38	22
50-64	48	29	23
65+	63	19	15

Note: Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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regularly write their passwords down. By contrast, 49% of adults under 30 say the same about saving their passwords in their browser.

One recommended approach to password management is becoming more common: More Americans are turning to password managers for help.

The share who say they use a password manager has risen from 20% in 2019 to 32% today. And roughly half of those ages 18 to 29 (49%) say they use these tools.

Smartphone security

Even so, some riskier privacy habits linger. Notably, 16% of smartphone users say they do not use a security feature – like a passcode, fingerprint or face recognition – to unlock their phone.

And this is more common among older smartphone users. Those ages 65 and older are more likely than adults under 30 to say they do not use a security feature to unlock their mobile devices (28% vs. 9%).

Still, most users across age groups do take this security precaution.

Most smartphone users lock their phone, but older groups are less likely to do so

% of U.S. adult smartphone owners who say they ___ to unlock their smartphone, such as a passcode, fingerprint, face recognition or other security feature

Do not use a security feature · **Do** use a security feature

	Do not use a security feature	Do use a security feature
Total	16	83
Ages 18-29	9	91
30-49	13	86
50-64	18	82
65+	28	72

Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
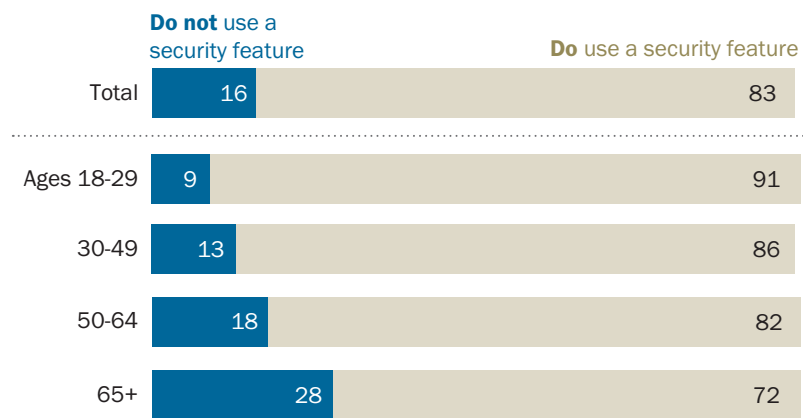"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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Data breaches and hacks

Today's data environment also comes with tangible risks: Some Americans' personal information has fallen into the wrong hands.

Roughly one-quarter of Americans (26%) say someone has put fraudulent charges on their debit or credit card in the last 12 months. And 11% have had their email or social media accounts taken

over without permission, while 7% have had someone attempt to open a line of credit or apply for a loan in their name.

All told, 34% have experienced at least one of these things in the past year.

1. Views of data privacy risks, personal data and digital privacy laws

Online privacy is complex, encompassing debates over law enforcement's data access, government regulation and what information companies can collect. This chapter examines Americans' perspectives on these issues and highlights how views vary across different groups, particularly by education and age.

When managing their privacy online, most Americans say they trust themselves to make the right decisions about their personal information (78%), and a majority are skeptical that anything they do will make a difference (61%).

Most trust themselves to make the right decisions about their personal information online, but a majority also are skeptical anything they do will make a difference

% of U.S. adults who say that when thinking about managing their privacy online, they feel …
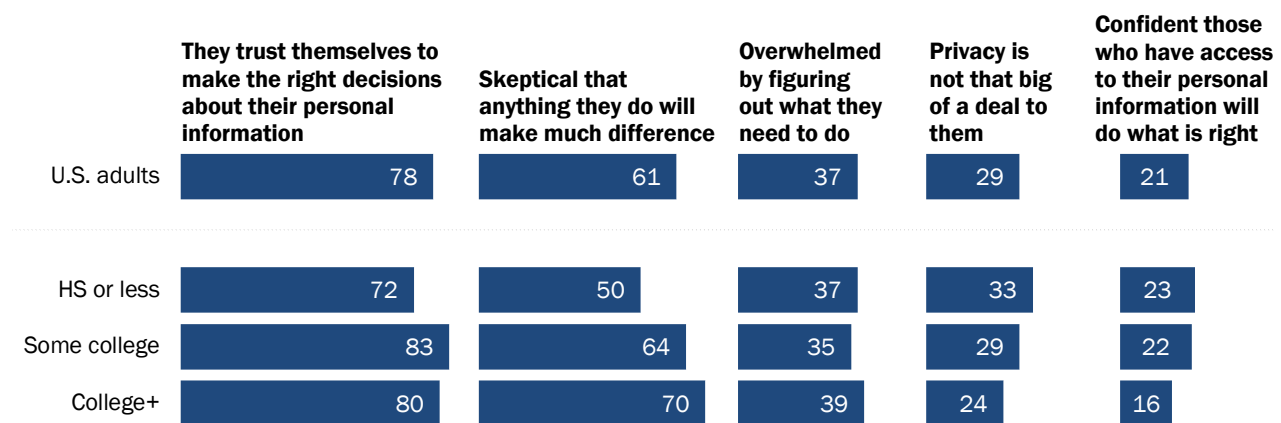
	They trust themselves to make the right decisions about their personal information	Skeptical that anything they do will make much difference	Overwhelmed by figuring out what they need to do	Privacy is not that big of a deal to them	Confident those who have access to their personal information will do what is right
U.S. adults	78	61	37	29	21
HS or less	72	50	37	33	23
Some college	83	64	35	29	22
College+	80	70	39	24	16

Note: Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Far fewer mention being overwhelmed by figuring out what they need to do (37%) or say privacy is not that big of a deal to them (29%).

Another 21% are confident that those with access to their personal information will do what is right.

Education differences

- 81% of those with at least some college experience say they trust themselves to make the right decisions about their personal information online, compared with 72% of those with a high school diploma or less.
- 67% of those with at least some college are skeptical that anything they do to manage their online privacy will make a difference, compared with half of those with a high school diploma or less formal education.

On the other hand, those with a high school education or less are more likely than those with some college experience or more to say that privacy isn't that big of a deal to them and that they are confident that those who have access to their personal information will do the right thing.

Personal data and information

The survey also explores the concerns people have about data collection and security – specifically, how they feel about three scenarios around companies, law enforcement and identity theft.

Roughly four-in-ten Americans say they are *very* worried about companies selling their information to others without them knowing (42%) or people stealing their identity or personal information (38%). Fewer are apprehensive about law enforcement monitoring what they do online (15%).

About 4 in 10 Americans are very worried about their information being sold or stolen, but this varies by race and ethnicity

*% of U.S. adults who say they are **very worried** about the following*

	Companies selling their information to others without them knowing	People stealing their identity or personal information	Law enforcement monitoring what they do online
U.S. adults	42	38	15
White	38	33	10
Black	49	48	21
Hispanic	47	50	23
Asian*	43	47	20

* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.
Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown. For the item about law enforcement, those who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Racial and ethnic differences

However, some of these shares are higher among Hispanic, Black or Asian adults:[1]

- Roughly half of Hispanic, Black or Asian adults are very worried about people stealing their identity or personal information, compared with a third of White adults.
- About one-in-five of each group are very worried about law enforcement monitoring their online activity; 10% of White adults say this.

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[1] This survey includes a total sample size of 364 Asian adults. The sample primarily includes English-speaking Asian adults and, therefore, it may not be representative of the overall Asian adult population. Despite this limitation, it is important to report the views of Asian adults on the topics in this study. As always, Asian adults' responses are incorporated into the general population figures throughout this report. Asian adults are shown as a separate group when the question was asked of the full sample. Because of the relatively small sample size and a reduction in precision due to weighting, results are not shown separately for Asian adults for questions that were only asked of a random half of respondents (Form 1/Form 2).

Feelings of concern, confusion and a lack of control over one's data

A majority of Americans say they are concerned, lack control and have a limited understanding about how the data collected about them is used. This is true whether it's the government or companies using their data. Similar sentiments were expressed in 2019, when we last asked about this.

Concern is high: 81% say they feel very or somewhat concerned with how companies use the data they collect about them. Fully 71% say the same regarding the government's use of data.

People don't feel in control: Roughly three-quarters or more feel they have very little or no control over the data collected about them by companies (73%) or the government (79%).
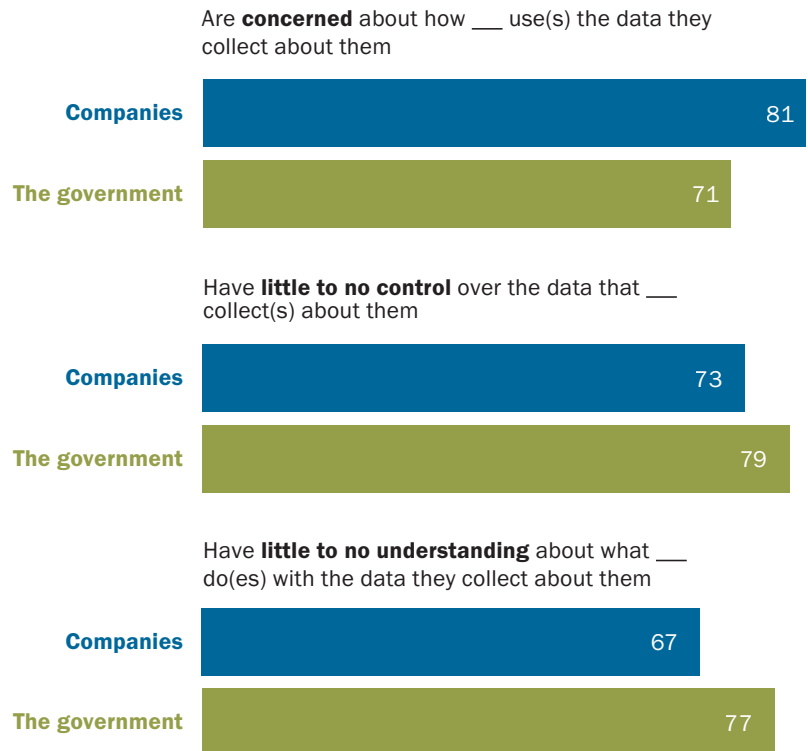
Americans are largely concerned and feel little control or understanding of how companies and the government collect, use data about them

% of U.S. adults who say they ...

Are **concerned** about how ___ use(s) the data they collect about them

Companies	81
The government	71

Have **little to no control** over the data that ___ collect(s) about them

Companies	73
The government	79

Have **little to no understanding** about what ___ do(es) with the data they collect about them

Companies	67
The government	77

Note: "Very/somewhat concerned" are combined above. Respondents could also say they were not too or not at all concerned. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Understanding is low:
Americans also say they don't understand what these actors are doing with the data collected about them. Majorities say they have very little or no understanding of this, whether by the government (77%) or companies (67%).

Americans are now less knowledgeable than before about how companies are using their personal data. The share who say they don't understand this has risen from 59% in 2019 to 67% in 2023.

They have also grown more concerned about how the government uses the data it collects about them, with the share expressing concern up from 64% to 71% over this same period.

While these sentiments have not changed significantly since 2019 among Democrats and those who lean toward the Democratic Party, Republicans and GOP leaners have grown more wary of government data collection. Today, 77% of Republicans say they are concerned about how the government uses data it collects about them, up from 63% four years earlier.

Privacy laws and regulation

Americans are less knowledgeable about data privacy laws today than in the past.

Today, 72% of Americans say they have little to no understanding about the laws and regulations that are currently in place to protect their data privacy. This is up from 63% in 2019.

By comparison, the shares who say they understand some or a great deal about these laws decreased from 37% in 2019 to 27% in 2023.

Growing shares say they don't understand data privacy laws

% of U.S. adults who say they understand the laws and regulations currently in place to protect their data privacy ...
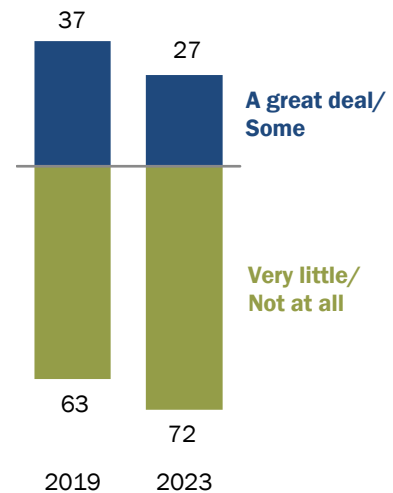
37 (2019) 27 (2023) — A great deal/ Some

63 (2019) 72 (2023) — Very little/ Not at all

2019 2023

Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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# Americans largely favor more regulation to protect personal information

Overall, 72% say there should be more government regulation of what companies can do with their customers' personal information. Just 7% say there should be less regulation. Another 18% say it should stay about the same.

Views by political affiliation

There is broad partisan support for greater involvement by the government in regulating consumer data.

Broad partisan support for more regulation of how consumer data is used

% of U.S. adults who say there should be ___ government regulation of what companies can do with their customers' personal information

	Less regulation	More regulation	About the same amount as now
U.S. adults	7	72	18
Rep/Lean Rep	8	68	21
Dem/Lean Dem	6	78	15
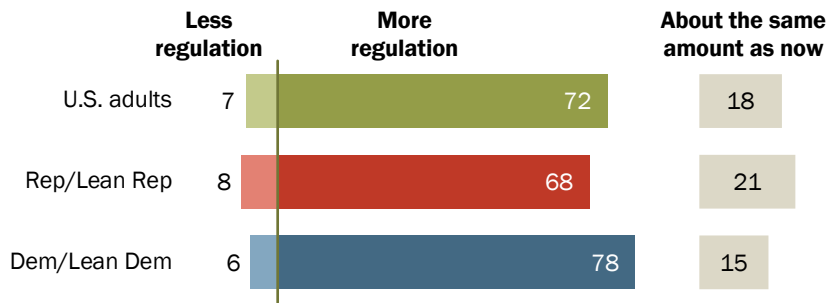
Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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A majority of Democrats and Republicans say there should be more government regulation for how companies treat users' personal information (78% vs. 68%).

These findings are largely on par with a 2019 Center survey that showed strong support for increased regulations across parties.

Trust in social media executives

Majorities of Americans say they have little to no trust that leaders of social media companies will publicly admit mistakes regarding consumer data being misused or compromised (77%), that these leaders will not sell users' personal data to others without their consent (76%), and that leaders would be held accountable by the government if they were to misuse or compromise users' personal data (71%).

This includes notable shares who have *no trust at all* in those who are running social media sites. For example, 46% say they have no trust at all in executives of social media companies to not sell users' data without their consent.

Most Americans don't trust social media CEOs to handle users' data responsibly

*% of U.S. adults who say they have **very little or no trust at all** that leaders of social media companies will ...*

Publicly admit mistakes and take responsibility when they misuse or compromise users' personal data	**77%**
Not sell users' personal data to others without their consent	**76%**
Be held accountable by the government if they misuse or compromise users' personal data	**71%**

Note: Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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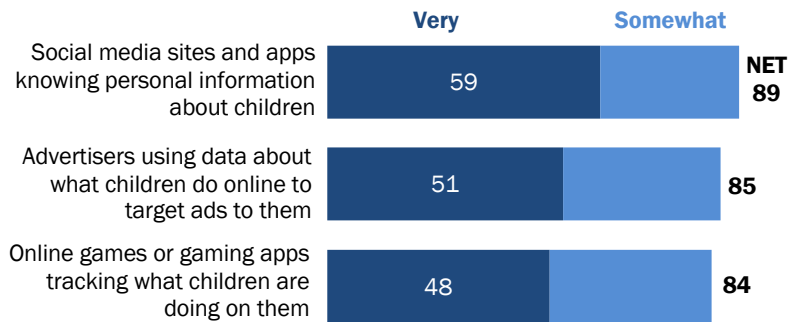## Children's online privacy: Concerns and responsibility

Most Americans say they are concerned about social media sites knowing personal information about children (89%), advertisers using data about what children do online to target ads to them (85%) and online games tracking what children are doing on them (84%).

Concern is widespread, with no statistically significant differences between those with and without children.

Another key question is who should be responsible for the actual protection of kids' online privacy.

About 9 in 10 Americans are concerned that social media sites and apps know kids' personal information

*% of U.S. adults who say they are **very or somewhat concerned** about the following*

	Very	Somewhat	NET
Social media sites and apps knowing personal information about children	59		89
Advertisers using data about what children do online to target ads to them	51		85
Online games or gaming apps tracking what children are doing on them	48		84

Note: Respondents could also say they were not too or not at all concerned. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Fully 85% say parents bear a great deal of responsibility for protecting children's online privacy. Roughly six-in-ten say the same about technology companies, and an even smaller share believe the government should have a great deal of responsibility.

Law enforcement and surveillance

The survey also measured how acceptable Americans think it is for law enforcement to use surveillance tools during criminal investigations.

Majority of Americans say parents and technology companies should have a great deal of responsibility for protecting children's online privacy

% of U.S. adults who say the following groups should have ___ (of) responsibility for protecting children's online privacy

Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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Older adults are more likely than younger adults to support law enforcement tracking locations, breaking into people's phones during an investigation

*% of U.S. adults who think it is **very or somewhat acceptable** for law enforcement to do each of the following during a criminal investigation*

	Obtain footage from cameras people install at their residences, like video doorbells	Use information from cellphone towers to track where someone is	Require third parties to turn over users' private chats, messages or calls	Break the passcode on a user's phone to get access to its contents
	Very Somewhat NET			
U.S. adults	74	74	55	54
White	76	77	57	58
Black	77	66	44	44
Hispanic	68	68	55	50
Ages 18-29	57	57	45	35
30-49	69	70	50	49
50-64	80	81	63	64
65+	88	86	61	68

Note: White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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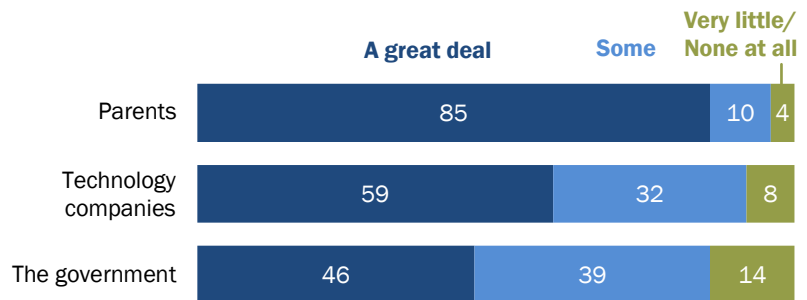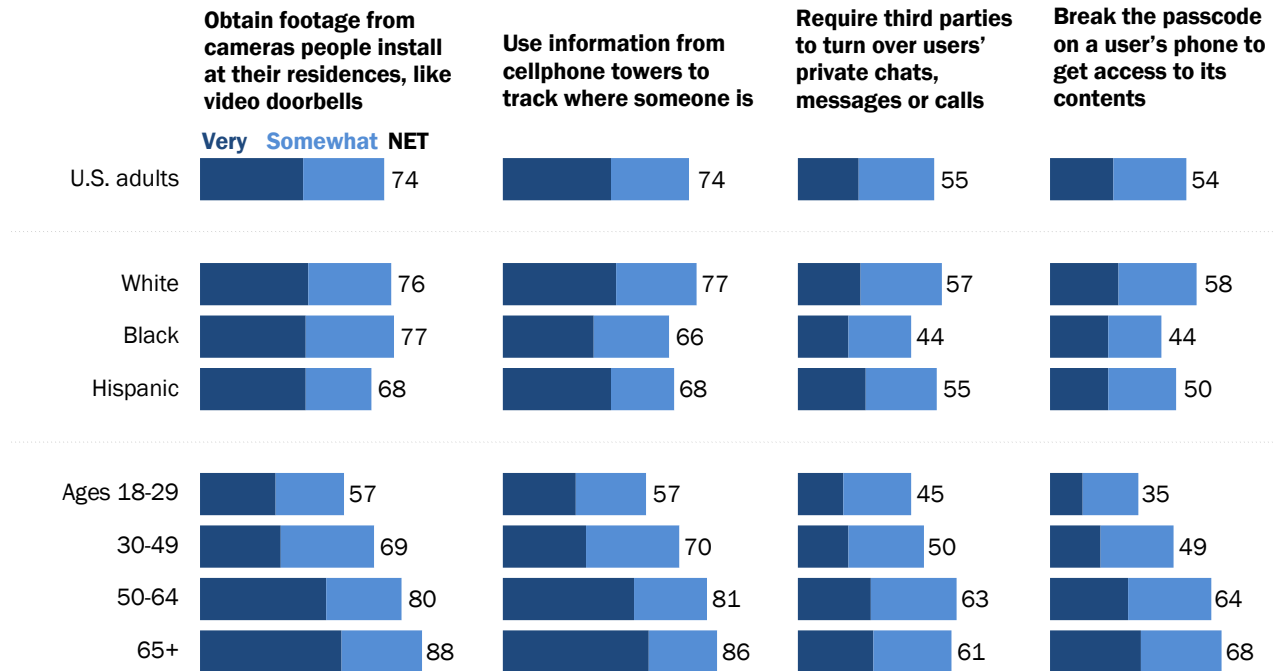
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Roughly three-quarters of Americans say it's very or somewhat acceptable for law enforcement to obtain footage from cameras people install at their residences during a criminal investigation or use information from cellphone towers to track where someone is.

By comparison, smaller shares – though still a slight majority – say it is acceptable to break the passcode on a user's phone (54%) or require third parties to turn over users' private chats, messages or calls (55%) during a criminal investigation.[2]

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[2] Half of respondents were asked the questions above, and the other half received the same questions with the added context of it being a "criminal investigation where public safety is at risk." Differences in response were largely modest. See Appendix A for these findings.

About one-in-ten Americans say they aren't sure how they feel about law enforcement doing each of these things.

Age differences

Older adults are much more likely than younger adults to say it's at least somewhat acceptable for law enforcement to take each of these actions in criminal investigations.

For example, 88% of those 65 and older say it's acceptable for law enforcement to obtain footage from cameras people install at their residences, compared with 57% of those ages 18 to 29.

Racial and ethnic differences

In the case of a criminal investigation:

- White adults are more likely than Hispanic and Black adults to think it's acceptable for law enforcement to use information from cellphone towers to track people's locations and to break the passcode on a user's phone to get access to its contents.
- White and Hispanic adults are more likely than Black adults to say it's acceptable to require third parties to turn over users' private chats, messages or calls.

AI and data collection

Artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to collect and analyze people's personal information. Some Americans are wary of companies using AI in this way.

Fully 55% of adults say using computer programs to determine who should be eligible for public assistance is unacceptable. Roughly a quarter say it's an acceptable use of AI.

Roughly half (48%) think it is unacceptable for social media companies to analyze what people do on their sites to deliver personalized content. Still, 41% are supportive of this.

Majority of Americans say it's unacceptable to use AI to determine public assistance eligibility, but views are mixed for smart speakers analyzing voices

*% of U.S. adults who say the following are **very or somewhat ___** uses of people's information*

Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Views are mixed when it comes to smart speakers analyzing people's voices to learn who is speaking. Statistically equal shares say it's unacceptable and acceptable (44% and 42%, respectively).
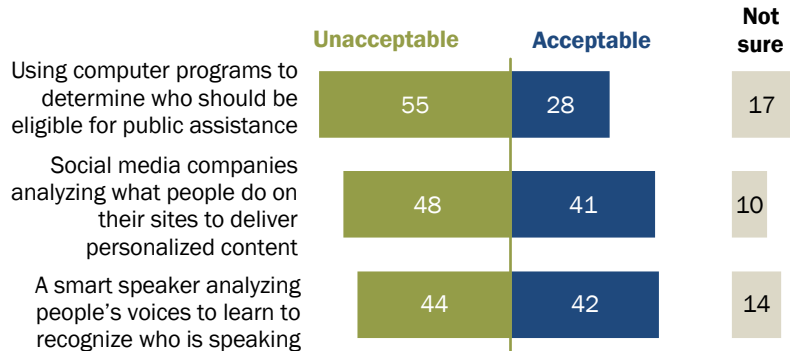
And some Americans – ranging from 10% to 17% – are uncertain about whether these uses are acceptable or not.

Age differences

- 49% of adults 50 and older say it's unacceptable for a smart speaker to analyze people's voices to learn to recognize who's speaking. This share drops to four-in-ten among adults under 50.
- Similarly, 56% of those 50 and older say social media companies analyzing what people do on their sites to deliver personalized content is unacceptable. But 41% of those under 50 say the same.
- There are no differences between those under 50 and those 50 and older over whether computer programs should be used to determine eligibility for public assistance.

Trust in companies that use AI

In addition to understanding people's comfort level with certain uses of AI, the survey also measured the public's attitudes toward companies that are utilizing AI in their products.

Among those who have heard of AI:

- 70% say they have little to no trust in companies to make responsible decisions about how they use AI in their products.
- Roughly eight-in-ten say the information will be used in ways people are not comfortable with or that were not originally intended.
- Views are more mixed regarding the potential that using AI to analyze personal details could make life easier. A majority of those who have heard of AI

Most Americans who have heard of AI don't trust companies to use it responsibly and say it will lead to unease and unintended uses

*Among those who have heard of artificial intelligence, % who say they **trust companies to use AI responsibly** ...*
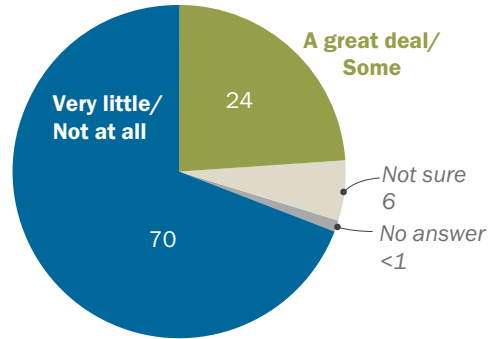
*Among those who have heard of AI, % who say that as companies use AI to collect and analyze personal information, this information **will** be used in ways that ...*

Note: "Definitely/probably will happen" are combined. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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say this will happen (62%). Regarding differences by age, adults under 50 are more optimistic than those 50 and older (70% vs. 54%).

Education differences

Among those who have heard of AI:

- 87% of those with a college degree or higher say companies will use AI to analyze personal details in ways people would not be comfortable with. Some 82% of those with some college experience and 74% with a high school diploma or less say the same.
- 88% of those with a bachelor's degree or more say companies will use this information in ways that were not originally intended. This share drops to 80% among those with some college experience and 71% among those with a high school diploma or less.
- About three-quarters of those with a college degree or more (74%) say this information will be used in ways that could make people's lives easier. But this share drops to 60% among those with some college experience and 52% among those with a high school diploma or less.

2. How Americans protect their online data

Online security can take many forms, whether it's a company's privacy policy or the password you choose for your email.

This chapter discusses Americans' views of and habits toward privacy policies, passwords and cybersecurity. In some cases, these opinions and experiences differ significantly by age, education level, race and ethnicity.

How people approach privacy policies

If you're online, you've likely had a company disclose its privacy policy. That document explains how they collect, use or generally manage user data.

The survey reveals three key insights about privacy policies that people may come across online or on their smartphone.

People frequently skip reading privacy policies

Some 56% of Americans say they always, almost always or often click "agree" right away, without reading what privacy policies say. Another 22% say they do this sometimes. And 18% say they rarely or never agree without reading.

Age differences

Younger adults are more likely than older adults to say they immediately click "agree" without reading online privacy policies. For example, 72% of adults under 30 say they do this, compared with 39% of those ages 65 and older.

Younger adults are more likely to agree to online privacy policies without ever reading them

% of U.S. adults who say they ___ agree to online privacy policies right away, without reading what the policies say

	Always or almost always/Often	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
U.S. adults	56	22	18
Ages 18-29	72	16	10
30-49	62	23	14
50-64	51	23	21
65+	39	24	29
HS or less	45	23	24
Some college	58	22	18
College+	68	20	12
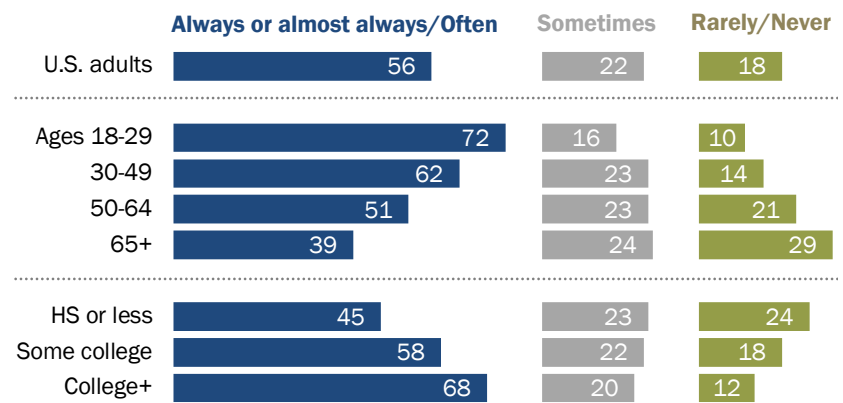
Note: Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Education differences

Americans who have more formal education also say they regularly agree to online privacy policies without reading them more often than those with less formal education. Fully 68% of those with a bachelor's degree or more say they always, almost always or often click "agree" to privacy policies without reading them, compared with 58% of those with some college experience and even smaller shares of those with a high school diploma or less.

Privacy policies are widely viewed as ineffective

Roughly six-in-ten adults (61%) say privacy policies are not too or not at all effective for communicating how companies are using people's data. Another 27% say they are somewhat effective for communicating this, and 7% say they are extremely or very effective.

Education differences

Views about the effectiveness of privacy policies vary widely by formal education level. About three-quarters of those with a bachelor's degree or more

Americans largely see privacy policies as ineffective for communicating how companies use people's data

% of U.S. adults who think privacy policies are a(n) ___ effective way for companies to share how they are using people's data
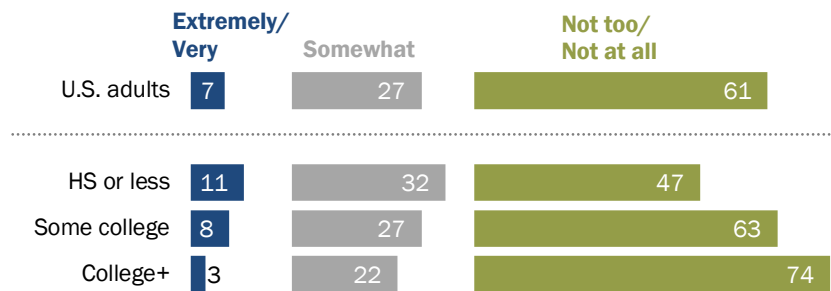
	Extremely/ Very	Somewhat	Not too/ Not at all
U.S. adults	7	27	61
HS or less	11	32	47
Some college	8	27	63
College+	3	22	74

Note: Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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(74%) say that privacy policies are not too or not at all effective for communicating how companies are using people's data.

That share drops to 63% among those with some college experience and is even lower for those with a high school diploma or less (47%).

Many see privacy policies as just something to get past

Americans are much more likely to say privacy policies are just something to get past than to consider these policies a meaningful part of their decision to use a product or service (69% vs. 27%).

Education differences

This varies by level of formal education. Some 77% of adults with a college degree or more say privacy policies are just something they have to get past to use a product or service. This share drops to 70% among those with some college experience and 60% among those with a high school diploma or less.

Roughly two-thirds of U.S. adults say privacy policies are just something they have to get past to use a product; this varies by education

% of U.S. adults who say privacy policies are ...
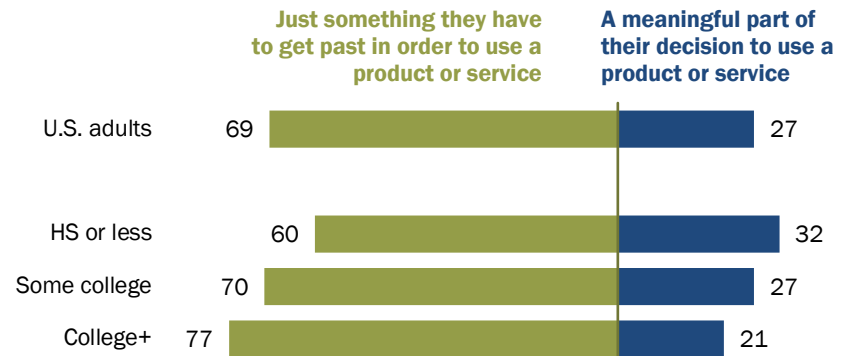
Note: Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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How people are protecting their digital privacy
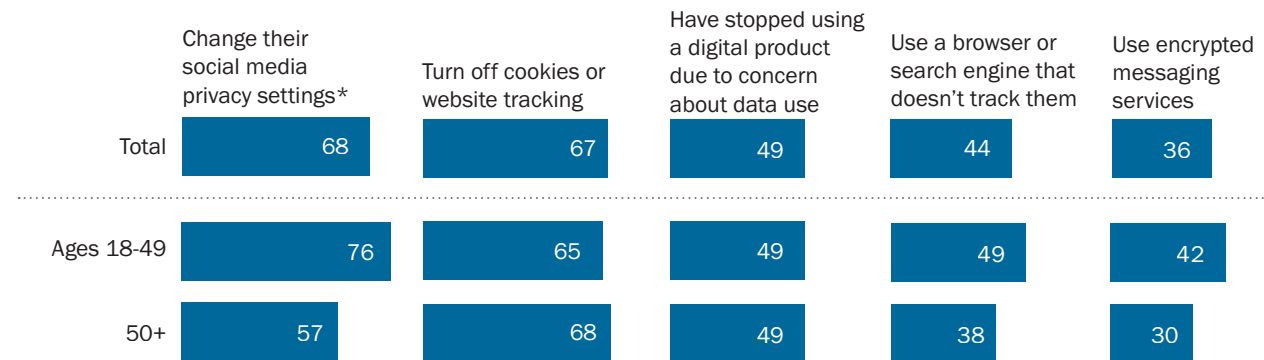
The survey also explored things people can do to take more control of their online privacy.

Roughly seven-in-ten social media users (68%) say they have changed their social media privacy settings as a way to manage their online privacy. A similar share of all U.S. adults say they have declined or turned off cookies or other tracking on websites for the same reason.

Smaller shares say they have stopped using a digital device, website or app because they were worried about how their personal information was being used (49%); used a browser or search engine that doesn't keep track of what they're doing (44%); or used a messaging app or service that encrypts their private communication with others (36%).

Majorities have turned off cookies, but some digital habits vary by age

% who say they ever ___ to manage their privacy online

	Change their social media privacy settings*	Turn off cookies or website tracking	Have stopped using a digital product due to concern about data use	Use a browser or search engine that doesn't track them	Use encrypted messaging services
Total	68	67	49	44	36
Ages 18-49	76	65	49	49	42
50+	57	68	49	38	30

* Based on social media users.
Note: Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Age differences

While there are no statistically significant age differences in Americans who have turned off cookies or stopped using a product because of privacy concerns, younger adults stand out on some other privacy-related tactics.

- 76% of social media users under 50 say they have changed their privacy settings on social media sites. This share drops to 62% of those 50 to 64 and half of those 65 and older.

- 49% of adults under 50 say they have used a browser or search engine that doesn't keep track of what they're doing. Roughly four-in-ten of those 50 and older (38%) say they've done this.
- 42% under 50 say they have used messaging apps or services that encrypt their private communications, compared with three-in-ten adults 50 and older who say the same.

Education differences

Those with higher levels of formal education are more likely to have done each of the five tasks asked about in this survey.

Roughly three-quarters of adult social media users who have some college experience or more (73%) say they have changed their privacy settings on these sites, compared with 60% of those with a high school diploma or less.

Similarly, Americans who have attended college are more likely than those who have not to say they have turned off website-tracking features (72% vs. 56%).

Software updates

Software updates are an [important tool for digital safety and security](#). They can lower your vulnerability to hackers by updating and correcting security flaws.

Overall, Americans say they update the software on their smartphone and apps, but the urgency in doing so varies.

About four-in-ten smartphone users (42%) say they handle software updates for their smartphone's operating system by setting them to update automatically.

Another 37% say they do this when they are notified, as soon as it's convenient for them, while about one-in-five say they update it only when required.

And a much smaller share (3%) say they never update their smartphone operating system.

A similar breakdown is present when asking about how people handle the updates on mobile apps.

Roughly 4 in 10 smartphone users say they set their phone and apps to automatically update

% of U.S. adult smartphone owners who say they typically handle software updates on ___ by updating them ...
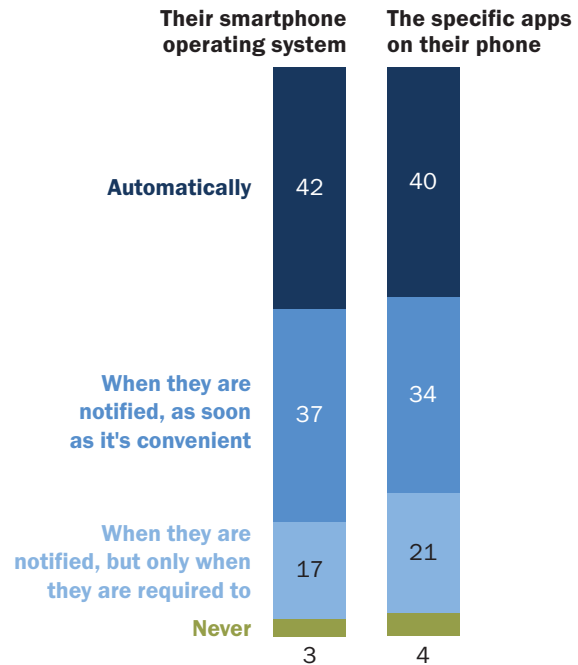
	Their smartphone operating system	The specific apps on their phone
Automatically	42	40
When they are notified, as soon as it's convenient	37	34
When they are notified, but only when they are required to	17	21
Never	3	4

Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Smartphone access

From passwords to fingerprints to face recognition, the way Americans access their smartphones has evolved over the years.

This survey shows most smartphone owners – 83% – say they take steps to safeguard their mobile devices through security features.

But some forgo security features altogether. Among smartphone owners, 16% say they never use a security feature to unlock their phone, such as a passcode, fingerprint or face recognition.

Age differences

Older users are more likely than younger users to not use the security features on their phones. About three-in-ten of those 65 and older say they don't use one. This drops to 18% among those 50 to 64 and to 11% for those under 50.

16% of smartphone owners don't use a security feature to unlock their device; older adults especially likely not to

*% of U.S. adult smartphone owners who say they **do not** use a passcode, fingerprint, face recognition or other security feature to unlock their smartphone*

Total	16
Ages 18-29	9
30-49	13
50-64	18
65+	28
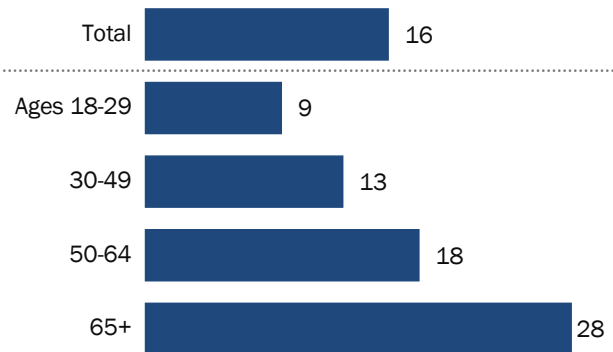
Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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How Americans handle their passwords

Secure vs. easy-to-recall passwords

While strong and secure passwords minimize risk, sometimes an easy-to-remember password wins out over strength. Americans are nearly split on how they navigate this trade-off.

Half say they generally create a password that they think will be more secure, even if it may be harder to remember. But a slightly smaller share (46%) opt for one that is easier to remember, even if it may be less secure.

Americans are nearly split on what they prioritize in a password: A secure one, or a memorable one

% of U.S. adults who say that when picking a password, they generally create one they think will be …

Easier to remember, even if it may be less secure

More secure, even if it may be harder to remember

	Easier to remember	More secure
U.S. adults	46	50
Ages 18-29	54	45
30-49	47	51
50-64	44	50
65+	38	53

Note: Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
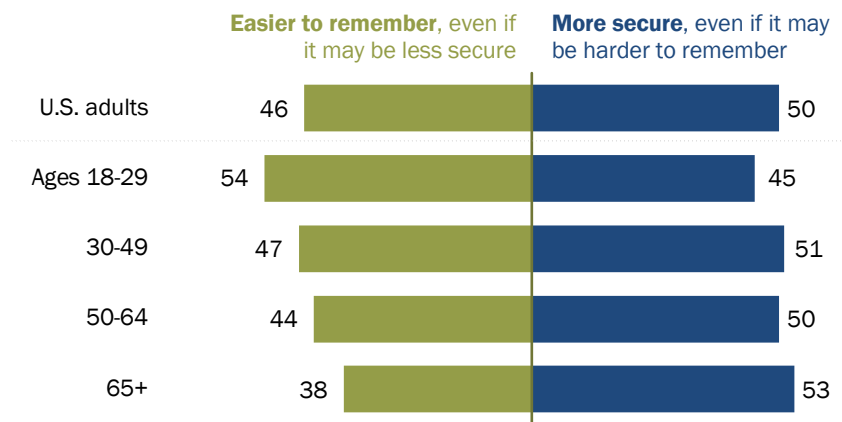"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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Adults under 30 are more likely than older groups to say they choose a memorable password over a secure one.

Password overload

Many Americans are stressed about the number of passwords they must keep up with.

Roughly seven-in-ten (69%) say they feel overwhelmed by the amount of passwords they have to keep track of. At the same time, 45% say they feel anxious about whether their passwords are strong and secure.

Age differences

Americans ages 30 and older are more likely than younger adults to report feeling overwhelmed by the number of passwords they have to keep track of, although a majority of younger Americans also report feeling this way.

Among adults under 30, 61% say they've felt overwhelmed by the amount of passwords they have to keep track of. This compares with 69% of 30- to 49-year-olds and 73% of those 50 and older.

About 7 in 10 Americans feel overwhelmed by the number of passwords they have to keep track of

% of U.S. adults who say they ever feel ...
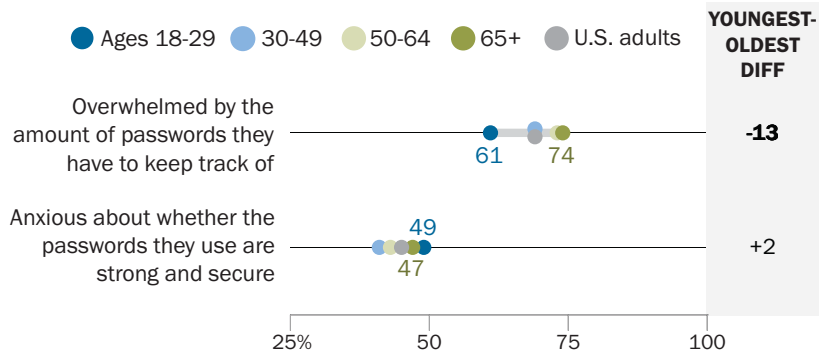
Note: Statistically significant differences in DIFF column are in **bold** and are based on subtracting the rounded values in the chart. Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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When it comes to feeling anxious about password management:

- About half of adults under 30 say they're anxious about the strength of the passwords, as do a similar share of those 65 and older.
- Those who are 30 to 64 are less likely to say this (42%).

Keeping track of passwords

People deal with these kinds of tensions in a variety of ways. The survey asked about three different password management strategies: writing passwords down, saving passwords in their browser and resetting passwords.

Some 41% of Americans say they always, almost always or often write down their passwords. Smaller shares say they save passwords in their browser or reset passwords with this same frequency.

Age differences

Americans' experiences with regularly writing down passwords or saving them in a browser vary significantly across age groups.

Some 63% of Americans ages 65 and older say they write their passwords down at least often, compared with 48% of those 50 to 64 and 28% of those under 50.

On the other hand, younger adults lead in regularly saving passwords to their browsers. About half of adults under 30

A majority of Americans 65 and older frequently write their passwords down

*% of U.S. adults who say they **always, almost always or often** do each of the following as they access their different online accounts*

	Write their passwords down	Save passwords in their browser	Reset passwords
U.S. adults	41	34	21
Ages 18-29	27	49	24
30-49	29	38	22
50-64	48	29	23
65+	63	19	15

Note: Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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say they do this regularly, compared with 38% of those ages 30 to 49, 29% of those 50 to 64 and 19% of those 65 and older.

Age differences are more modest for regularly resetting passwords. However, those 65 and older are the least likely to report doing so.
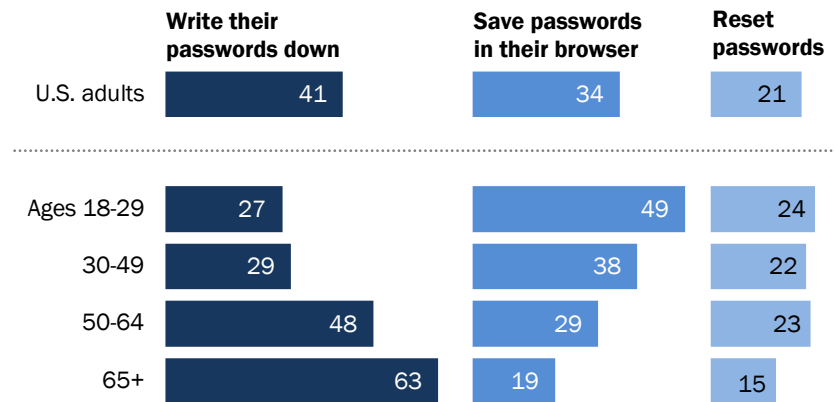
Password managers

In addition to writing down passwords or saving them in browsers, some are turning to digital tools for help. Growing shares of Americans use digital tools to keep track of their passwords.

The share of Americans who say they use a password manager has risen from 20% in 2019 to 32% today.

Age differences

About half of those ages 18 to 29 (49%) say they use a password manager. That share drops to 37% among those ages 30 to 49 and to one-quarter or fewer for those 50 and older.

Education differences

Those with more formal education are more likely than those with less education to say they use password managers.

Roughly four-in-ten of those with a bachelor's degree or more (38%) say they use one. By comparison, 34% of those with some college experience and 26% with a high school diploma or less say the same.

Growing shares of Americans use a password manager

% of U.S. adults who say they use a password manager, such as LastPass or iCloud Keychain, to help keep track of their online passwords
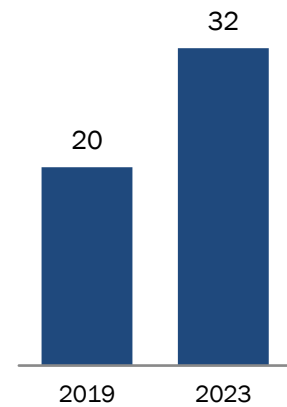
Note: Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Data breaches and hacks

Some Americans – particularly those who are Black – have been the target of hacking.

Roughly a quarter of Americans (26%) say someone put fraudulent charges on their debit or credit card in the last 12 months. Smaller shares say they have had someone take over their email or social media account without their permission (11%) or attempt to open a line of credit or apply for a loan using their name (7%) during this time.

In total, 34% have experienced at least one of these issues in the past year.

Credit card fraud is growing more common. The share who say someone has put fraudulent charges on their debit or credit card rose from 21% in 2019 to 26% today.

Black adults are more likely than other racial and ethnic groups to say they have dealt with an online hack in the last 12 months

% of U.S. adults who say that in the last 12 months, they had someone …
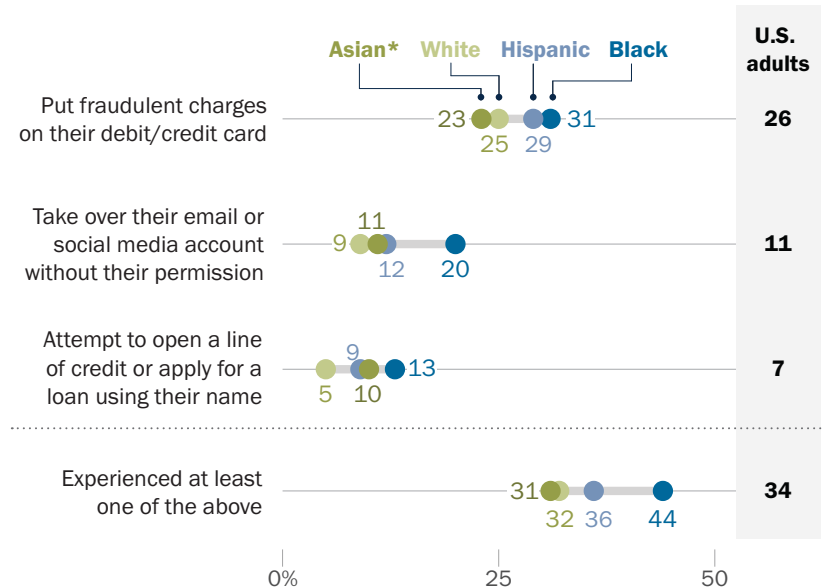
* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.
Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Racial and ethnic differences

Black Americans stand out among other racial and ethnic groups in saying that these types of breaches have happened to them. For example, 20% of Black adults say that in the last 12 months, they had someone take over their email or social media account without their permission. This share drops to about one-in-ten for White, Hispanic or Asian adults.

In total, 44% of Black adults have experienced at least one of these three types of data breaches in the past year. This is higher than their White, Hispanic or Asian counterparts.

Knowing what to do if hacked

Roughly half of Americans (53%) say they are very or somewhat confident they know what to do if their personal information is hacked or stolen online. But about four-in-ten feel differently, saying they have little to no confidence on what next steps they should take.

Age differences

Those ages 18 to 29 are *less* confident than older adults that they know what steps to take if their personal information is stolen online.

Just over half of adults under 30 (54%) say they are not too or not at all confident in knowing what steps to take if their personal information is compromised. Those shares drop to 44% among those ages 30 to 49 and 39% for those 50 and older.

Education differences

Those with some college experience or more are more likely to say they're confident in knowing next steps than those with a high school diploma or less (56% vs. 48%).

About half of Americans say they know what to do if they are the victim of an online hack, but 43% aren't as confident

% of U.S. adults who say they are ___ confident in knowing what steps to take if their personal information is hacked or stolen online

	Very/Somewhat	Not too/Not at all
U.S. adults	53	43
Ages 18-29	46	54
30-49	56	44
50-64	58	37
65+	51	41
White	55	42
Black	58	36
Hispanic	46	50
Asian*	46	54
HS or less	48	45
Some college	57	42
College+	56	44

* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.
Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer or who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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3. A deep dive into online privacy choices

People face a number of choices in managing their online privacy, and each person approaches these from a different angle.

Some people are tech-savvy and confident in their ability to protect their data. Others are overwhelmed trying to navigate the privacy settings that tech companies make available. And while many are concerned about their privacy, translating that concern into action can be complicated.

No single factor explains the ins and outs of people's privacy choices. We explored three things that might matter: **knowledge** about privacy and cybersecurity topics; **confidence** in their tech skills; and **concern** about companies' data collection. Each sheds light on potential reasons why people do what they do online.

Some overall takeaways:

- **Knowledge and privacy choices:** More privacy knowledge translates into more steps taken to protect data, but also more skepticism about whether those steps are actually useful.
- **Confidence and privacy choices:** Those who are most confident using digital devices generally trust themselves to make privacy decisions. They're less overwhelmed than others. And they are more likely to take steps to protect their data.
- **Concern and privacy choices:** Concern about how companies use one's data often goes hand in hand with action. But the most concerned tend to be especially overwhelmed, and not everyone who's concerned takes these steps. Privacy policies are one example of a place where regardless of concern, Americans are largely inattentive.

Identifying the most and least knowledgeable, confident and concerned

In the sections that follow, we explore how privacy actions and feelings vary by six key groups:

- The most versus least knowledgeable about privacy and cybersecurity;
- The most versus least confident using technology; and
- The most versus least concerned about what companies are doing with people's data.[3]

The first two concepts relate to digital literacy. This can be defined in many ways but is widely agreed upon as critical in today's world – including for technical, daunting topics like managing online privacy.[4] The third relates to an ongoing debate: Whether the "privacy paradox" exists. We walk through each of these below.

Knowledge

First, we included five questions that were part of a larger series of questions about tech knowledge.

Three of these questions were related to cybersecurity and best practices for "digital hygiene": identifying the most secure password from a list, knowing that cookies track users' visits and activity on websites, and being able to identify an example of two-factor authentication.

Two were about privacy regulations: knowing that the U.S. does not have a comprehensive national privacy law and knowing that websites in the U.S. are prohibited from collecting data from children under age 13 without a parent's consent.

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[3] For results among "moderately" knowledgeable, confident and concerned Americans, read Appendix B.
[4] Researchers and practitioners have taken a number of approaches to defining digital literacy. While this analysis explores only a limited number of measures, we acknowledge the broader body of literature around these topics relevant to privacy and online life generally.

In total:

- 21% of Americans can correctly answer at least four of the five items. We refer to this group as **most knowledgeable** about privacy and cybersecurity topics.[5]
- 55% give two or three correct answers.
- 24% answer zero or one item correctly; we call this group **least knowledgeable.**

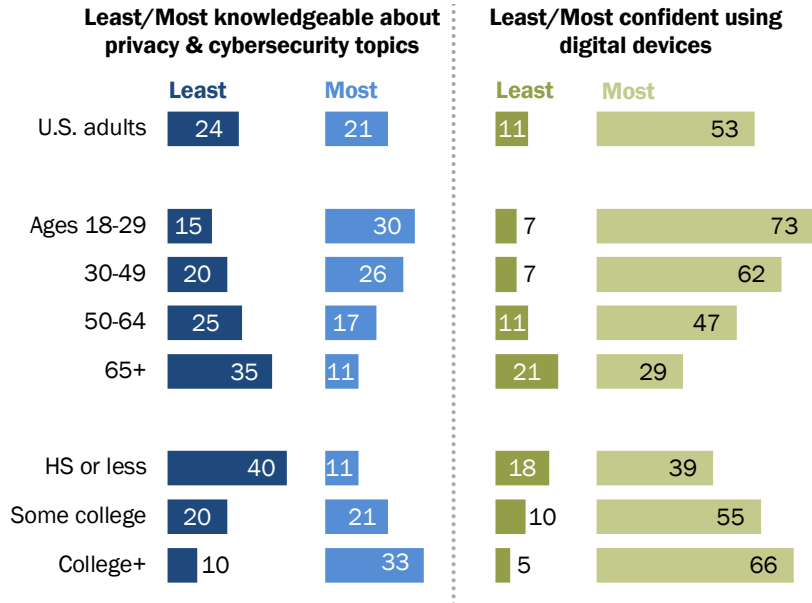Levels of knowledge vary notably by age and education.

Confidence

Aside from knowledge, we also explored how people feel about their tech skills.[6] Specifically, we asked about people's confidence using computers, smartphones or other electronic devices to do the things they need to do online.[7]

Privacy and cybersecurity knowledge and confidence in digital skills vary by age and education

% of U.S. adults who fall into each of the following groups

	Least/Most knowledgeable about privacy & cybersecurity topics		Least/Most confident using digital devices	
	Least	**Most**	**Least**	**Most**
U.S. adults	24	21	11	53
Ages 18-29	15	30	7	73
30-49	20	26	7	62
50-64	25	17	11	47
65+	35	11	21	29
HS or less	40	11	18	39
Some college	20	21	10	55
College+	10	33	5	66

Note: Knowledge is based on five-question series. Least knowledgeable group answered 0 or 1 correctly; most knowledgeable group answered 4 or 5 correctly. See topline for full question wording. Least confident includes those who say they are not at all or only a little confident using digital devices to do the things they need to do online. Most confident includes those who say they are very confident. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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- 53% of Americans say they are very confident in these abilities – we refer to them as the **most confident.**
- 36% are somewhat confident.
- 11% have little to no confidence – the **least confident** in this report.

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[5] All questions were multiple choice. For purposes of this analysis, answers were counted as "not answered correctly" if the respondent chose an incorrect answer, said they were not sure, or skipped the question. For more on how these individual shares break down – for example, the share of Americans who were not sure – refer to the topline or read our report on Americans' knowledge of AI, cybersecurity and Big Tech.

[6] Read Appendix C for details on Americans' ability to independently set up and use digital devices, which was covered in the survey but is not a focus of the analysis presented here.

[7] The measures of knowledge and confidence are related, but not completely interchangeable. For example, just 3% of the most knowledgeable have little to no confidence in their tech skills. But at the other end of the spectrum, 31% of the least knowledgeable about privacy have a high level of confidence in their tech skills generally.

And like privacy knowledge, confidence in tech skills varies notably across demographic groups.

Concern

We further looked at people's concerns about how their data is being used. A large body of research has explored the possibility of a "privacy paradox": Namely, worry about privacy doesn't always translate into action.

Whether and why this "paradox" exists are up for debate. Some say convenience wins out even if you have to give up data. Others say people's behaviors are more about being resigned to the realities of modern digital life.

When it comes to concern:

- 35% of Americans say they are very concerned about how companies are using the data they collect about them. We refer to them as the **most concerned** about this.
- 46% are somewhat concerned.
- 19% are not at all or not too concerned. We call them the **least concerned.**

Knowledge and privacy choices

Those who know a great deal about privacy and cybersecurity are consistently more likely than those who know little to take actions to protect their data.[8]

This pattern shows up across a number of items we examined. Some of the largest differences are in adjusting social media privacy settings, avoiding cookies, using a private browser or search engine and using a password manager.

Yet knowledge breeds doubt as well. The most knowledgeable Americans are far more skeptical than the least knowledgeable that their actions will make a difference. And they are less confident that others who can access their data will do what is right with it.

Age and knowledge

Even among the highly knowledgeable, some digital habits still vary by age.

Privacy knowledge often translates into privacy action – but also into skepticism and doubt

% of U.S. adults, by privacy and cybersecurity knowledge, who say they …
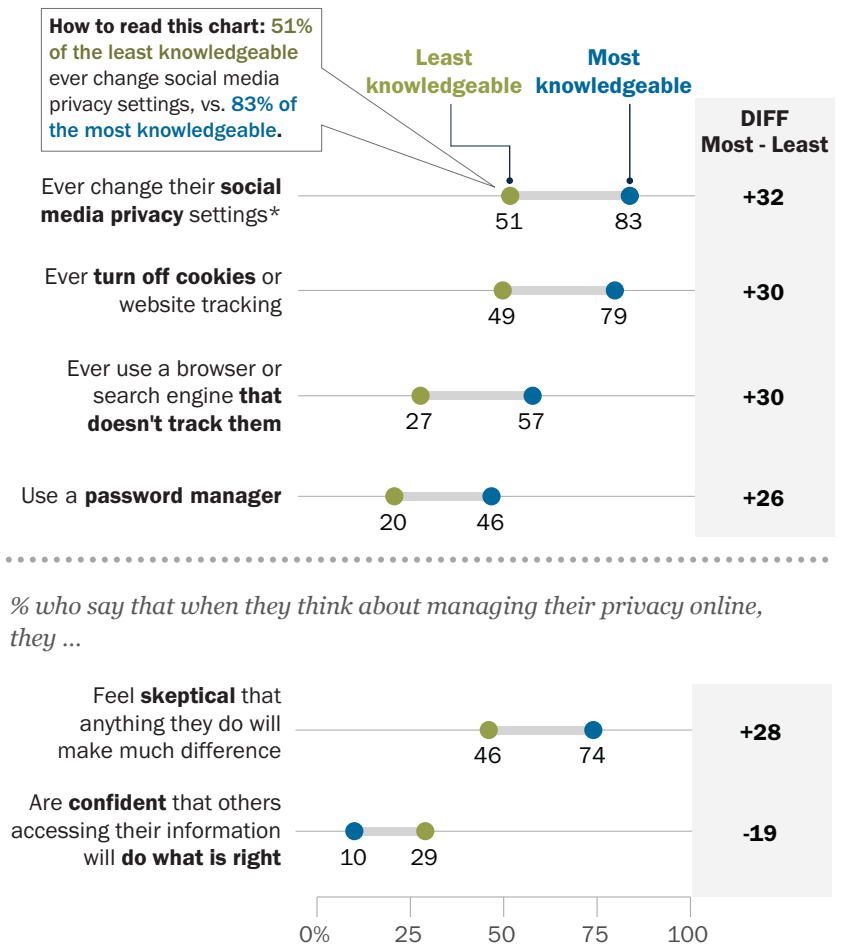
How to read this chart: 51% of the least knowledgeable ever change social media privacy settings, vs. 83% of the most knowledgeable.

Least knowledgeable — Most knowledgeable

		DIFF Most - Least
Ever change their **social media privacy** settings*	51 · 83	+32
Ever **turn off cookies** or website tracking	49 · 79	+30
Ever use a browser or search engine **that doesn't track them**	27 · 57	+30
Use a **password manager**	20 · 46	+26

% who say that when they think about managing their privacy online, they …

		DIFF Most - Least
Feel **skeptical** that anything they do will make much difference	46 · 74	+28
Are **confident** that others accessing their information will **do what is right**	10 · 29	-19

0%　25　50　75　100

* Based on social media users.
Note: Subset of items with largest differences displayed above; read Appendix B and the topline for more details. All differences in DIFF column are statistically significant and are based on subtracting the rounded values in the chart for the most and least knowledgeable groups. Those who did not give an answer, gave other responses or do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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[8] General conclusions presented in these sections largely remain unchanged when running analyses that control for demographic factors.

Among the most knowledgeable social media users:

- 86% of the most knowledgeable users ages 18 to 49 ever change their social media privacy settings.
- This drops to 74% of those 50 and older.

There are also age differences among the most savvy in using password managers:

- Half of highly knowledgeable adults under 50 use a password manager.
- This compares with 40% of those 50 to 64 and 33% of those 65 and up.

Confidence and privacy choices

Like knowledge, confidence also relates to how people act and feel about their online privacy.

Americans who are most confident in their tech skills are most likely to trust themselves with privacy decisions. Fully 83% of the most confident say so. Still, more than half – 56% – of the least confident trust themselves with these kinds of calls.

The most confident are also far more likely to ever take each of the actions we explored. For example, 41% of the most confident Americans use a password manager, versus just 17% of those least confident in their tech skills.

The most confident are *least* likely to be overwhelmed by the task of managing online privacy. Those with moderate or low levels of confidence are both more overwhelmed, by comparison.

Even so, those with little to no confidence take some steps to protect their data:

- 66% of the least confident use a passcode lock on their phone, if they own one.
- 55% of the least confident ever decline cookies or other tracking on websites.

People who are most confident in their tech skills trust themselves to manage their data privacy, and are far more likely to take steps to do so

% of U.S. adults, by confidence using digital devices, who say that when they think about managing their privacy online, they …

How to read this chart: 56% of the least confident trust themselves to make the right decisions, vs. 83% of the most confident.
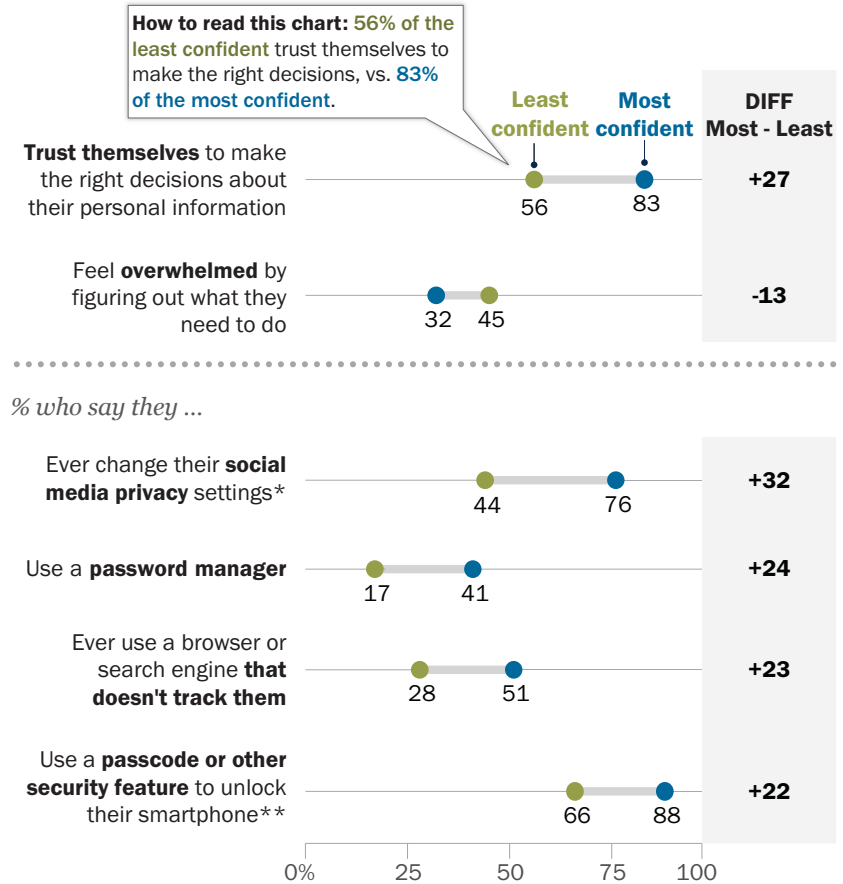
* Based on social media users.
** Based on smartphone owners.
Note: Subset of items with largest differences displayed above; read Appendix B and topline for more details. All differences in DIFF column are statistically significant and are based on subtracting the rounded values in the chart for the most and least confident groups. Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown. For items based on all adults, those who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Skepticism also is widespread across confidence levels. A majority of the most confident say they're skeptical that anything they do will make much difference, and about half of the least confident say the same.

Concern and privacy choices

Concern about what companies are doing with people's data is related to the actions people take to protect their information – but still, not all of these steps are widely adopted.

There are several large differences between the most and the least concerned.

For example, the most concerned are far more likely to have stopped using a digital device, website or app due to worry about how their personal information is being used. They're also more likely to decline cookies, use a private browser or change social media privacy settings.
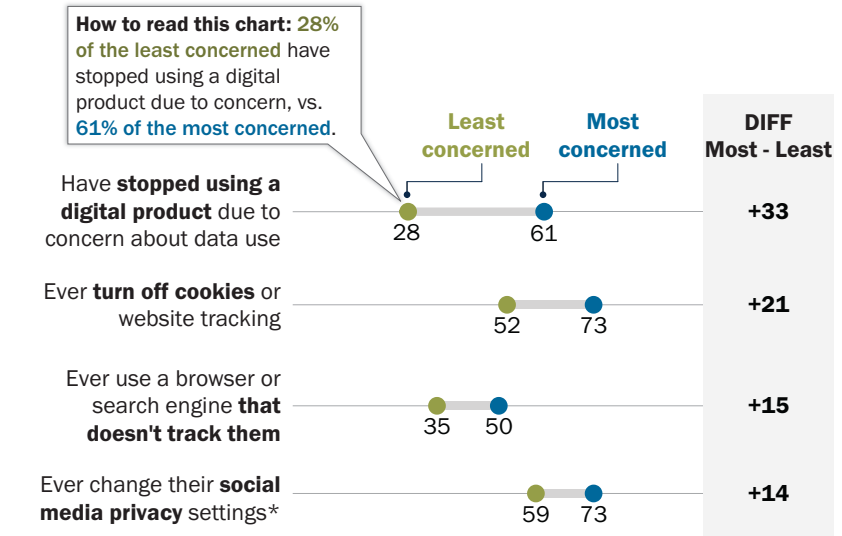
Yet this doesn't mean everyone who is most concerned takes these steps. Half or fewer of the most concerned ever use a browser where they can't be tracked or use encrypted messaging. And while a majority of the most concerned have changed up the digital products they use because of this, another 34% of this group have not done so.

It can be daunting to figure out how to address privacy concerns, and some of the emotional reactions we explored illustrate this.

The most concerned are far

Concern about companies' data collection often translates into action – but about half of the most concerned are also overwhelmed

% of U.S. adults, by concern about companies' data practices, who say they ...

How to read this chart: 28% of the least concerned have stopped using a digital product due to concern, vs. 61% of the most concerned.

	Least concerned	Most concerned	DIFF Most - Least
Have **stopped using a digital product** due to concern about data use	28	61	+33
Ever **turn off cookies** or website tracking	52	73	+21
Ever use a browser or search engine **that doesn't track them**	35	50	+15
Ever change their **social media privacy** settings*	59	73	+14

% who say that when they think about managing their privacy online, they ...

	Least concerned	Most concerned	DIFF Most - Least
Feel **overwhelmed** by figuring out what they need to do	22	47	+25
Are **confident** that others accessing their information will **do what is right**	13	32	-19

0%   25   50   75   100

* Based on social media users.
Note: Subset of items with largest differences displayed above; read Appendix B and the topline for more details. All differences in DIFF column are statistically significant and are based on subtracting the rounded values in the chart for the most and least concerned groups. Those who did not give an answer, gave other responses or do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
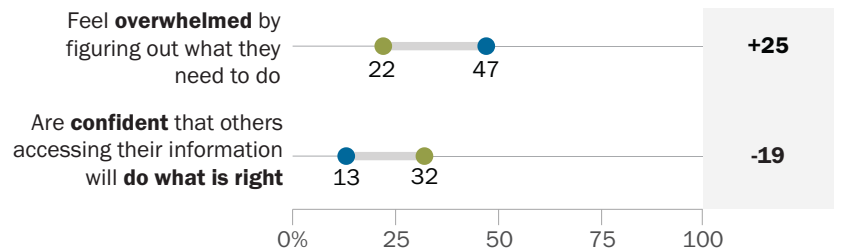"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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more overwhelmed managing their privacy, compared with those with little to no concern. About half of those who are highly concerned about companies' data collection say they feel overwhelmed figuring out what to do.

The case of privacy policies

Americans' approach to privacy policies illustrates these tensions between concern and action.

A notable share of Americans – 45% – are very or somewhat concerned about how companies use data they collect about them and, at the same time, say they frequently agree to privacy policies without reading them.

The survey was not designed to explore why people don't take the time to read these policies despite their concern about what's being done with their data. But majorities of Americans say they find them ineffective and just something to get past, suggesting that companies' preferred method of communicating important details isn't working for many.

Nearly half of Americans are concerned about companies' use of their data – yet frequently skip privacy policies

% of U.S. adults who say they …

Are both **concerned about how companies use their data** and **frequently skip reading privacy policies**

Are **very or somewhat concerned** about how companies use the data they collect about them

81

45

Always, almost always or often agree to online privacy policies right away, without reading what the policies say

56

Note: Those who did not give an answer, gave other responses or do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
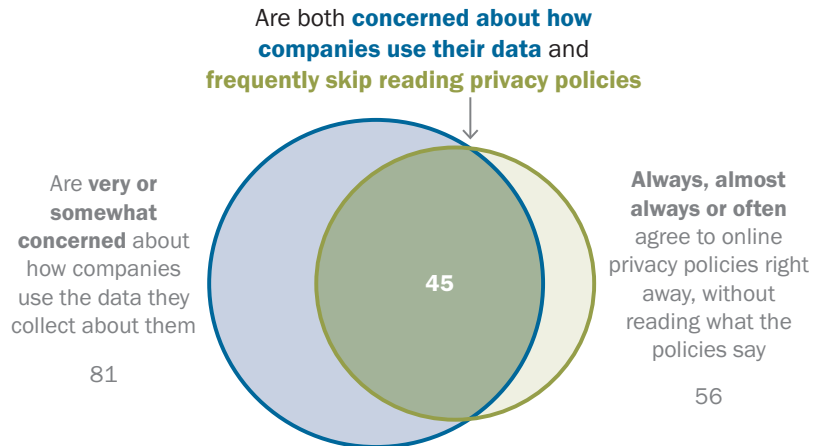"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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How concerned people are is less of a factor here: About half of Americans or more skip privacy policies frequently, regardless of concern about data use.

Ignoring privacy policies is especially common among those who are most knowledgeable or confident.

For example, three-quarters of the most knowledgeable say they frequently click "agree" without reading privacy policies. Among the least knowledgeable, that share drops to 36%.

This mirrors patterns by age and education discussed in Chapter 2. Younger adults and those with higher levels of formal education are especially likely to ignore online privacy policies. These groups also have more knowledge and confidence.

Frequently ignoring privacy policies is especially common among those with more privacy knowledge, confidence in their tech skills

*% of U.S. adults in each of the following groups who say they always, almost always or often **agree to online privacy policies right away**, without reading what the policies say*

How to read this chart: 36% of the least knowledgeable frequently skip reading privacy policies, vs. 75% of the most knowledgeable.

	Least	Most	DIFF Most - Least
Least vs. most **knowledgeable** about privacy and cybersecurity	36	75	+39
Least vs. most **confident** in their tech skills	30	66	+36
Least vs. most **concerned** about companies' data collection	52	58	-6

Note: Read Appendix B and the topline for more details. All differences in DIFF column are statistically significant and are based on subtracting the rounded values in the chart for the two groups displayed in each row. Those who did not give an answer, gave other responses or do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
"How Americans View Data Privacy"
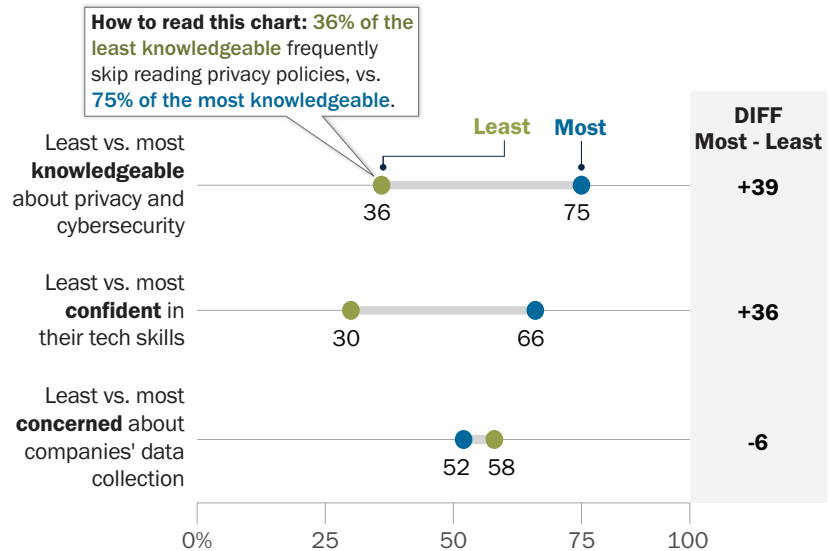
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Age and knowledge

Within the most knowledgeable group, we still see that age matters:

- Some 84% of highly knowledgeable 18- to 29-year-olds frequently skip privacy policies.
- That share is 75% among those ages 30 to 49 and 70% of those 50 to 64.
- And it drops further to 59% among those 65 and older.

Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Find related reports online at pewresearch.org/internet.

Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from ATP Wave 127, conducted from May 15 to May 21, 2023, and includes an oversample of Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men, and non-Hispanic Asian adults in order to provide more precise estimates of the opinions and experiences of these smaller demographic subgroups. These oversampled groups are weighted back to reflect their correct proportions in the population. A total of 5,101 panelists responded out of 5,841 who were sampled, for a response rate of 87%. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 2%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 5,101 respondents is plus or minus 1.7 percentage points.

Panel recruitment

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	1,498
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	881
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	432
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS	9,396	8,778	4,115
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS	5,900	4,720	1,466
June 1 to July 19, 2020; Feb. 10 to March 31, 2021	ABS	3,197	2,812	1,541
May 29 to July 7, 2021; Sept. 16 to Nov. 1, 2021	ABS	1,329	1,162	785
May 24 to Sept. 29, 2022	ABS	3,354	2,869	1,691
Total		**42,894**	**30,283**	**12,409**

Note: RDD is random-digit dial; ABS is address-based sampling. Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. Sampled households receive mailings asking a randomly selected adult to complete a survey online. A question at the end of the survey asks if the respondent is willing to join the ATP. In 2020 and 2021 another stage was added to the recruitment. Households that did not respond to the online survey were sent a paper version of the questionnaire, $5 and a postage-paid return envelope. A subset of the adults who returned the paper version of the survey were invited to join the ATP. This subset of adults received a follow-up mailing with a $10 pre-incentive and invitation to join the ATP.

Across the five address-based recruitments, a total of 23,176 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 20,341 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, one adult was selected and asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 30,283 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 12,409 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.[9] The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was noninstitutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii. It featured a stratified random sample from the ATP in which Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men, and non-Hispanic Asian adults were selected with certainty. The remaining panelists were sampled at rates designed to ensure that the share of respondents in each stratum is proportional to its share of the U.S. adult population to the greatest extent possible. Respondent weights are adjusted to account for differential probabilities of selection as described in the Weighting section below.

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[9] AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling."

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with Ipsos. The web program was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the Ipsos project management team and Pew Research Center researchers. The Ipsos project management team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or a gift code to Amazon.com or could choose to decline the incentive. Incentive amounts ranged from $5 to $20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was May 15-21, 2023. Postcard notifications were mailed to all ATP panelists with a known residential address on May 15.

Invitations were sent out in two separate launches: soft launch and full launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on May 15. The ATP panelists chosen for the initial soft launch were known responders who had completed previous ATP surveys within one day of receiving their invitation. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on May 16.

All panelists with an email address received an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. All ATP panelists who consented to SMS messages received an SMS invitation and up to two SMS reminders.

Invitation and reminder dates, ATP Wave 127

	Soft launch	Full launch
Initial invitation	May 15, 2023	May 16, 2023
First reminder	May 18, 2023	May 18, 2023
Final reminder	May 20, 2023	May 20, 2023

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Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, the Center's researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing clear patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for very high rates of leaving questions blank, as well as always selecting the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, five ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey. These weights are then rescaled and adjusted to account for changes in the design of ATP recruitment surveys from year to year. Finally, the weights are calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

American Trends Panel weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed)	2021 American Community Survey (ACS)
Age x Gender	
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	2021 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2021 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2022 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Frequency of internet use	
Religious affiliation	
Additional weighting dimensions applied within Black adults	
Age	2021 American Community Survey (ACS)
Gender	
Education	
Hispanic ethnicity	
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2022 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Religious affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on noninstitutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population.

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Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th

percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Sample sizes and margins of error, ATP Wave 127

Group	Unweighted sample size	Weighted percentages	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	5,101		1.7 percentage points
High school or less	1,304		3.4 percentage points
Some college	1,600		2.9 percentage points
College+	2,179		2.4 percentage points
Ages 18-29	626		4.8 percentage points
30-49	1,771		2.9 percentage points
50-64	1,456		3.1 percentage points
65+	1,227		3.2 percentage points
White, non-Hispanic	2,797		2.1 percentage points
Black. non-Hispanic	813		4.8 percentage points
Hispanic	902		5.0 percentage points
Asian, non-Hispanic	364		7.6 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	2,267	45	2.4 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	2,618	47	2.4 percentage points

Note: This survey includes oversamples of Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men, and non-Hispanic Asian adults. Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. Read the Sample design and Weighting sections for details.

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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

A note about the Asian adult sample

This survey includes a total sample size of 364 Asian adults. The sample primarily includes English-speaking Asian adults and, therefore, it may not be representative of the overall Asian

adult population. Despite this limitation, it is important to report the views of Asian adults on the topics in this study. As always, Asian adults' responses are incorporated into the general population figures throughout this report.

Asian adults are shown as a separate group when the question was asked of the full sample. Because of the relatively small sample size and a reduction in precision due to weighting, results are not shown separately for Asian adults for questions that were only asked of a random half of respondents (Form 1/Form 2).

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions, ATP Wave 127

	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	5,101
Logged on to survey; broke off	2.12	88
Logged on to survey; did not complete any items	2.1121	18
Never logged on (implicit refusal)	2.11	627
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	2
Completed interview but was removed for data quality		5
Screened out		0
Total panelists sampled for the survey		**5,841**
Completed interviews	I	5,101
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	738
Non-contact	NC	2
Other	O	0
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		**5,841**
AAPOR RR1 = I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)		87%

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Cumulative response rate as of ATP Wave 127

	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	71%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 127	48%
Response rate to Wave 127 survey	87%
Cumulative response rate	**3%**

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Appendix A: Law enforcement's use of technology in investigations

Attitudes about investigative measures conducted by law enforcement when public safety is at risk

*% of U.S. adults who think it is **very or somewhat acceptable** for law enforcement to do each of the following during a criminal investigation where public safety is at risk*

	Obtain footage from cameras people install at their residences, like video doorbells	Use information from cellphone towers to track where someone is	Require third parties to turn over users' private chats, messages or calls	Break the passcode on a user's phone to get access to its contents
U.S. adults	74	76	59	60
White	77	80	63	63
Black	70	71	54	59
Hispanic	69	72	56	54
Ages 18-29	63	67	49	53
30-49	68	73	57	54
50-64	78	79	63	63
65+	87	88	68	73

Note: White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
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Appendix B: Privacy outcomes by knowledge, confidence and concern

Privacy outcomes by privacy and cybersecurity knowledge

% of U.S. adults who are ___ knowledgeable about privacy and cybersecurity topics who say …

	Least (0-1 correct, of 5)	Moderately (2-3 correct, of 5)	Most (4-5 correct, of 5)
They ever __ to manage their privacy online			
Change their social media privacy settings*	51	69	83
Decline or turn off cookies or other tracking on websites	49	69	79
Use a browser or search engine that doesn't keep track of what they're doing	27	46	57
Use messaging apps or services that encrypt their private communication with others	26	36	48
They …			
Use a passcode, fingerprint, face recognition or other security feature to unlock their smartphone**	74	84	91
Always, almost always or often agree to privacy policies right away, without reading what these policies say	36	58	75
Have ever stopped using a digital device, website or app because they were worried about how their personal information was being used	39	50	58
Use a password manager, such as LastPass or iCloud Keychain, to help keep track of their online passwords	20	32	46
When they think about managing their privacy online, they …			
Trust themselves to make the right decisions about their personal information	70	80	80
Feel skeptical that anything they do will make much difference	46	62	74
Feel overwhelmed by figuring out what they need to do	39	35	41
Feel privacy is not that big of a deal to them	35	28	23
Are confident those who have access to their personal information will do what is right	29	21	10

* Based on social media users.
** Based on smartphone owners.
Note: See topline for full question wording. Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown. For items based on all adults, those who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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Privacy outcomes by confidence using digital devices

% of U.S. adults who are ___ confident using computers, smartphones or other electronic devices to do the things they need to do online who say …

	Least (Only a little/ Not at all)	Moderately (Somewhat)	Most (Very)
They ever __ to manage their privacy online			
Change their social media privacy settings*	44	62	76
Decline or turn off cookies or other tracking on websites	55	66	70
Use a browser or search engine that doesn't keep track of what they're doing	28	39	51
Use messaging apps or services that encrypt their private communication with others	22	32	42
They …			
Use a passcode, fingerprint, face recognition or other security feature to unlock their smartphone**	66	79	88
Always, almost always or often agree to privacy policies right away, without reading what these policies say	30	51	66
Have ever stopped using a digital device, website or app because they were worried about how their personal information was being used	44	48	50
Use a password manager, such as LastPass or iCloud Keychain, to help keep track of their online passwords	17	25	41
When they think about managing their privacy online, they …			
Trust themselves to make the right decisions about their personal information	56	76	83
Feel skeptical that anything they do will make much difference	51	59	64
Feel overwhelmed by figuring out what they need to do	45	43	32
Feel privacy is not that big of a deal to them	30	30	27
Are confident those who have access to their personal information will do what is right	13	23	21

* Based on social media users.
** Based on smartphone owners.
Note: Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown. For items based on all adults, those who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
"How Americans View Data Privacy"

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Privacy outcomes by concern about company data collection

% of U.S. adults who are ___ concerned about what companies are doing with the data they collect about them who say ...

	Least (Not too/ Not at all)	Moderately (Somewhat)	Most (Very)
They ever __ to manage their privacy online			
Decline or turn off cookies or other tracking on websites	52	67	73
Change their social media privacy settings*	59	69	73
Use a browser or search engine that doesn't keep track of what they're doing	35	43	50
Use messaging apps or services that encrypt their private communication with others	29	35	41
They ...			
Use a passcode, fingerprint, face recognition or other security feature to unlock their smartphone**	81	84	82
Have ever stopped using a digital device, website or app because they were worried about how their personal information was being used	28	48	61
Always, almost always or often agree to privacy policies right away, without reading what these policies say	58	59	52
Use a password manager, such as LastPass or iCloud Keychain, to help keep track of their online passwords	33	34	30
When they think about managing their privacy online, they ...			
Trust themselves to make the right decisions about their personal information	79	80	75
Feel skeptical that anything they do will make much difference	51	63	63
Feel overwhelmed by figuring out what they need to do	22	35	47
Feel privacy is not that big of a deal to them	37	26	28
Are confident those who have access to their personal information will do what is right	32	21	13

* Based on social media users.
** Based on smartphone owners.
Note: Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown. For items based on all adults, those who do not use the internet are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
"How Americans View Data Privacy"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Appendix C: Confident and independent use of digital devices, by age and education

Confidence using, setting up digital devices varies by age and education

% of U.S. adults who say the following

Overall, they feel __ confident using computers, smartphones or other electronic devices to do the things they need to do online

When they get a new computer, smartphone, or other electronic device, they usually...
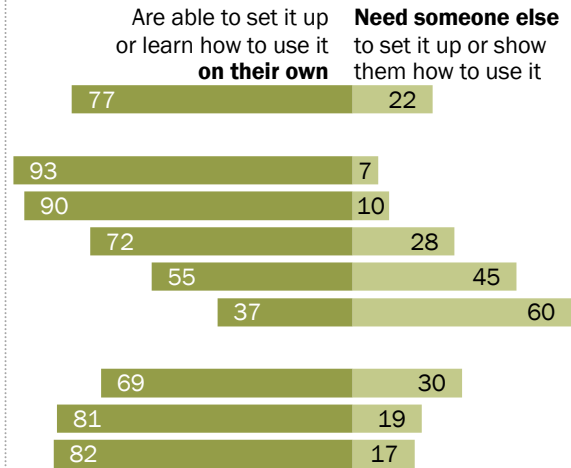
	Very	Somewhat	Only a little	Not at all		Are able to set it up or learn how to use it **on their own**	**Need someone else** to set it up or show them how to use it
U.S. adults	53	36	9	2		77	22
Ages 18-29	73	20	6	1		93	7
30-49	62	31	6	1		90	10
50-64	47	42	9	2		72	28
65-74	33	50	13	4		55	45
75+	21	50	22	7		37	60
HS or less	39	42	14	4		69	30
Some college	55	34	8	2		81	19
College+	66	29	4	1		82	17

Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 15-21, 2023.
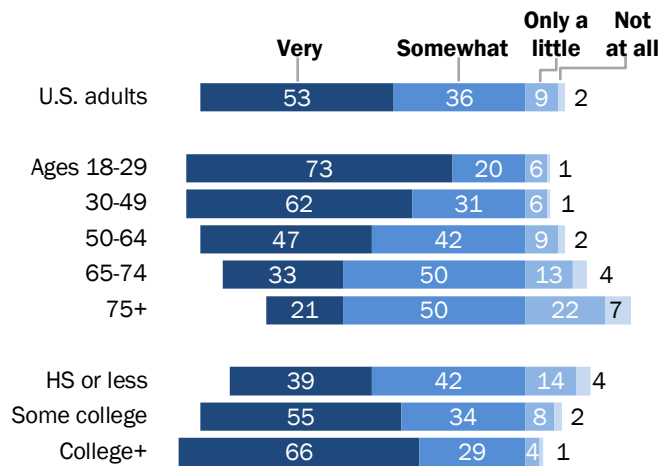"How Americans View Data Privacy"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Topline questionnaire

2023 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 127 INTERNET TOPLINE
MAY 15-21, 2023
N=5,101

THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED BELOW ARE PART OF A LARGER SURVEY CONDUCTED ON THE AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL. OTHER QUESTIONS ON THIS SURVEY HAVE BEEN RELEASED OR ARE BEING HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE.

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. THE PERCENTAGES LESS THAN 0.5% ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). ROWS/COLUMNS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING.

	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level
U.S. adults	5,101	+/- 1.7 percentage points

ASK ALL:
DIGCONF   Overall, how confident do you feel using computers, smartphones, or other electronic devices to do the things you need to do online?[10]

May 15-21, 2023		Apr 12-18, 2021	Oct 29-Nov 11, 2019
53	Very confident	57	58
36	Somewhat confident	33	31
9	Only a little confident	7	7
2	Not at all confident	2	3
*	No answer	1	*

ASK ALL:
TECHHELP   Which of the following best describes you, even if neither is exactly right?

When I get a new computer, smartphone, or other electronic device, I usually… **[RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS]**

May 15-21, 2023		Apr 12-18, 2021
22	Need someone else to set it up or show me how to use it	26
77	Am able to set it up and learn how to use it on my own	73
*	No answer	1

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[10] In the April 2021 survey, the question wording was slightly different: "Overall, how confident do you feel, if at all, using computers, smartphones, or other electronic devices to do the things you need to do online?"

PRIVFEEL BASED ON ALL ADULTS:
PRIVFEEL   When you think about managing your privacy online, do you feel… **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	Yes, I do	No, I do not	No answer	Does not use internet
a. Overwhelmed by figuring out what you need to do				
May 15-21, 2023	37	59	1	3
b. Skeptical that anything you do will make much difference				
May 15-21, 2023	61	35	1	3
c. Confident those who have access to your personal information will do what is right				
May 15-21, 2023	21	76	1	3
d. You trust yourself to make the right decisions about your personal information				
May 15-21, 2023	78	19	*	3
e. Like privacy is not that big of a deal to you				
May 15-21, 2023	29	67	1	3

ASK ALL:
PRIVWRY   How worried are you about each of the following? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	Very worried	Somewhat worried	Not too worried	Not at all worried	No answer
a. People stealing your identity or personal information					
May 15-21, 2023	38	46	14	2	*
b. Companies selling your information to others without you knowing					
May 15-21, 2023	42	42	14	2	*
c. **ASK IF INTERNET USER (XTABLET=2) [N=4,996]:** Law enforcement monitoring what you do online					
May 15-21, 2023	15	24	39	21	*

PRIVWRYc BASED ON ALL ADULTS:
PRIVWRY   How worried are you about each of the following? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	Very worried	Somewhat worried	Not too worried	Not at all worried	No answer	Does not use internet
c. Law enforcement monitoring what you do online						
May 15-21, 2023	15	24	38	20	*	3

CYBCONF BASED ON ALL ADULTS:
CYBCONF   How confident are you in knowing what steps to take if your personal information is hacked or stolen online?

<u>May 15-21, 2023</u>

11	Very confident
42	Somewhat confident
34	Not too confident
10	Not at all confident
*	No answer
3	Does not use internet

ASK ALL:
DB1   In the last 12 months, have you had someone… **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**[11]

		Yes, this has happened in the last 12 months	No, this has not happened in the last 12 months	No answer
a.	Put fraudulent charges on your debit or credit card			
	May 15-21, 2023	26	73	*
	Jun 3-17, 2019	21	78	1
b.	Take over your email or social media account without your permission[12]			
	May 15-21, 2023	11	89	*
	Jun 3-17, 2019	8	91	1
c.	Attempt to open a line of credit or apply for a loan using your name			
	May 15-21, 2023	7	93	*
	Jun 3-17, 2019	6	93	1

DISPLAY TO ALL:
We are interested in what people know off the top of their head about some topics. You may find some of these questions easy and others difficult. (If you don't know the answer, select "Not sure.") As far as you know…

[RANDOMIZE QUESTION ORDER DKQ1 – DKQ10]

DKQ1 NOT PRESENTED HERE

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[11] In the June 2019 survey, the question wording did not include "This has (not) happened in the last 12 months" in the response options. Additionally in 2019, item b read: "Take over your social media or email account without your permission."
[12] On this item, "no" also includes those who do not use the internet.

ASK ALL:
DKQ2   If a website uses cookies, it means that the site can… **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1-4, WITH 5 ALWAYS LAST]**

   May 15-21, 2023
        3   Protect your computer from getting viruses
        8   Send you pop-up advertisements
        3   Look at files saved on your computer
        67   Track your visits and activity on the site {correct}
        19   Not sure
        *   No answer

DKQ3-4 NOT PRESENTED HERE

ASK ALL:
DKQ5   Which of the following passwords is the most secure? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1-4, WITH 5 ALWAYS LAST]**

   May 15-21, 2023
        1   SportsFan1983
        87   WTh!58iLf2?9zD {correct}
        1   abc12.6.48
        1   1234567890
        10   Not sure
        *   No answer

NO DKQ6; DKQ7 NOT PRESENTED HERE

ASK ALL:

DKQ8   Some websites and online services use a security process known as two-step or two-factor authentication. Which of the following images is an example of two-factor authentication? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1-4, WITH 5 ALWAYS LAST]**

<u>May 15-21, 2023</u>

48

{correct}

4

21

Select all images with

crosswalks

Click verify once there are none left.

14

C 🎧 ⓘ
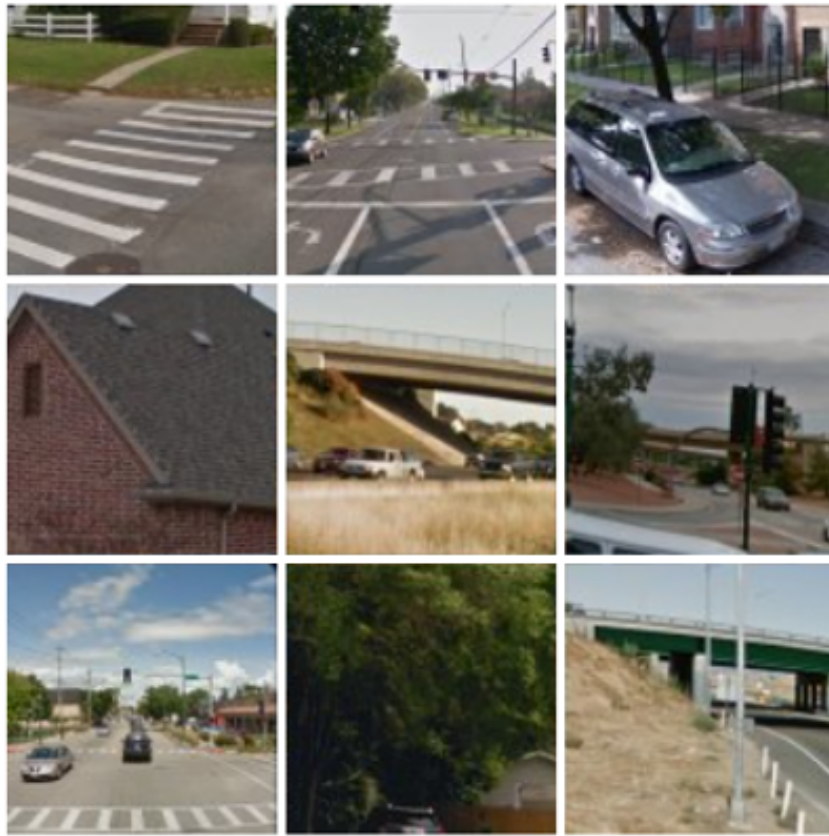
VERIFY

13	Not sure
1	No answer

ASK ALL:
DKQ9   Websites in the United States are prohibited from collecting data online from children under what age without a parent's consent? **[RANDOMIZE HALF ORDER 1-5 OR 5-1, WITH 6 ALWAYS LAST]**

May 15-21, 2023
1	{Age} 5
1	10
21	13 {correct}
8	16
27	18
40	Not sure
1	No answer

ASK ALL:
DKQ10   Does the United States have a national privacy law that sets common standards for what companies can do with all data their products and services collect?

May 15-21, 2023
24	Yes, it does
23	No, it does not {correct}
52	Not sure
1	No answer

[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF BLOCK 1 AND BLOCK 2]
[BLOCK 1]

ASK ALL:
CONCERNCO   How concerned are you about how <u>companies</u> are using the data they collect about you?[13]

May 15-21, 2023		Jun 3-17, 2019
35	Very concerned	36
46	Somewhat concerned	43
16	Not too concerned	17
3	Not at all concerned	4
*	No answer	*

ASK ALL:
CONTROLCO   How much control do you think you have over the data that <u>companies</u> collect about you?

May 15-21, 2023		Jun 3-17, 2019
5	A great deal of control	3
21	Some control	15
51	Very little control	51
23	No control	30
1	No answer	*

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[13] In the June 2019 survey, the question wording was slightly different: "How concerned, if at all, are you about how companies are using the data they collect about you?"

ASK ALL:
UNDERSTANDCO How much do you feel you understand what <u>companies</u> are doing with the data they
collect about you?

<u>May 15-21, 2023</u>		<u>Jun 3-17, 2019</u>
6	A great deal	6
26	Some	34
49	Very little	48
18	Nothing	11
1	No answer	1

[END OF BLOCK 1]

[BLOCK 2]

ASK ALL:
CONCERNGOV How concerned are you about how the <u>government</u> is using the data it collects about
you?[14]

<u>May 15-21, 2023</u>		<u>Jun 3-17, 2019</u>
31	Very concerned	25
39	Somewhat concerned	39
24	Not too concerned	26
5	Not at all concerned	10
*	No answer	*

ASK ALL:
CONTROLGOV How much control do you think you have over the data the <u>government</u> collects about
you?

<u>May 15-21, 2023</u>		<u>Jun 3-17, 2019</u>
6	A great deal of control	4
14	Some control	12
43	Very little control	41
36	No control	43
1	No answer	*

ASK ALL:
UNDERSTANDGOV How much do you feel you understand what the <u>government</u> is doing with the data it
collects about you?

<u>May 15-21, 2023</u>		<u>Jun 3-17, 2019</u>
5	A great deal	4
17	Some	17
50	Very little	53
27	Nothing	25
1	No answer	*

[END OF BLOCK 2]

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[14] In the June 2019 survey, the question wording was slightly different: "How concerned, if at all, are you about how the government is using the data it collects about you?"

ASK ALL:

AIPRIV1 How acceptable do you think each of the following uses of people's information is?
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

		Very acceptable	Somewhat acceptable	Somewhat unacceptable	Very unacceptable	Not sure	No answer
a.	A smart speaker analyzing people's voices to learn to recognize who is speaking						
	May 15-21, 2023	8	33	21	24	14	*
b.	Social media companies analyzing what people do on their sites to deliver personalized content						
	May 15-21, 2023	5	36	27	21	10	*
c.	Using computer programs, or algorithms, to determine who should be eligible for public assistance						
	May 15-21, 2023	5	23	21	34	17	*

DISPLAY IF INTERNET USER (XTABLET=2) [N=4,996]:
Privacy policies are often used by companies to describe how they are using people's data. Thinking about privacy policies you might come across online or on your smartphone…

PPREAD BASED ON ALL ADULTS:
PPREAD How often do you click "agree" right away, without reading what these policies say?

May 15-21, 2023
31	Always or almost always
26	Often
22	Sometimes
12	Rarely
6	Never
*	No answer
3	Does not use internet

PPEFF BASED ON ALL ADULTS:
PPEFF   How effective do you think privacy policies are as a way for companies to communicate how they are using people's data? **[RANDOMLY DISPLAY RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5 OR 5-1]**

May 15-21, 2023
2	Extremely effective
6	Very effective
27	Somewhat effective
36	Not too effective
25	Not at all effective
1	No answer
3	Does not use internet

PPUSE BASED ON ALL ADULTS:
PPUSE   Which of the following comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS]**

Privacy policies are…

May 15-21, 2023
69	Just something I have to get past in order to use a product or service
27	A meaningful part of my decision to use a product or service
1	No answer
3	Does not use internet

DISPLAY TO ALL:
Thinking now about the leaders of social media companies…

ASK ALL:
SMLEAD   How much do you trust that leaders of social media companies will… **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

		A great deal	Some	Very little	Not at all	Not sure	No answer
a.	Publicly admit mistakes and take responsibility when they misuse or compromise users' personal data						
	May 15-21, 2023	5	11	34	43	7	*
b.	Be held accountable by the government if they misuse or compromise users' personal data						
	May 15-21, 2023	7	16	34	36	7	*
c.	Not sell users' personal data to others without their consent						
	May 15-21, 2023	6	11	30	46	7	*

DIGHABT1 BASED ON ALL ADULTS:
DIGHABT1 Have you ever stopped using a digital device, website or app because you were worried about how your personal information was being used?

May 15-21, 2023

49	Yes, I have
47	No, I have not
1	No answer
3	Does not use internet

ASK IF INTERNET USER (XTABLET=2) [N=4,996]:
DIGHABT2 Do you ever do any of the following to manage your privacy online? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	Yes, I do	No, I do not	No answer
a. Decline or turn off cookies or other tracking on websites			
May 15-21, 2023	69	30	1
NO ITEM b			
c. Use messaging apps or services that encrypt your private communication with others			
May 15-21, 2023	37	61	1
d. Use a browser or search engine that doesn't keep track of what you're doing			
May 15-21, 2023	45	53	2
e. **ASK ITEM e if SOCIAL MEDIA USER (SNSUSE=1) [N=3,944]:** Change your social media privacy settings			
May 15-21, 2023	68	31	1

DIGHABT2a-d BASED ON ALL ADULTS:
DIGHABT2   Do you ever do any of the following to manage your privacy online? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	Yes, I do	No, I do not	No answer	Does not use internet
a. Decline or turn off cookies or other tracking on websites				
May 15-21, 2023	67	30	1	3

NO ITEM b

	Yes, I do	No, I do not	No answer	Does not use internet
c. Use messaging apps or services that encrypt your private communication with others				
May 15-21, 2023	36	59	1	3
d. Use a browser or search engine that doesn't keep track of what you're doing				
May 15-21, 2023	44	51	2	3

PWFEEL BASED ON ALL ADULTS:
PWFEEL   Do you ever feel… **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	Yes, I feel this way	No, I do not feel this way	No answer to PWFEEL	Does not use internet
a. Overwhelmed by the amount of passwords you have to keep track of?				
May 15-21, 2023	69	27	1	3
b. Anxious about whether the passwords you use are strong and secure?				
May 15-21, 2023	45	51	1	3

PWPREF BASED ON ALL ADULTS:
PWPREF   When picking a password, do you generally create one that you think will be…
[RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS]

May 15-21, 2023
46	Easier to remember, even if it may be less secure
50	More secure, even if it may be harder to remember
1	No answer
3	Does not use internet

PWMAN BASED ON ALL ADULTS:

PWMAN   Do you use a password manager, such as LastPass or iCloud Keychain, to help keep track of your online passwords?

May 15-21, 2023		Jun 3-17, 2019 [15]
32	Yes, I use a password manager	20
66	No, I do not use a password manager	80
1	No answer	1

PWEXP BASED ON ALL ADULTS:

PWEXP   In thinking about how you access your different online accounts, how often do you…
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

		Always or almost always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	No answer	Does not use internet
a.	Reset your passwords							
	May 15-21, 2023	5	16	47	24	4	1	3
b.	Save passwords in your browser							
	May 15-21, 2023	16	18	24	14	24	1	3
c.	Write your passwords down							
	May 15-21, 2023	26	15	19	17	20	1	3

DISPLAY IF SMARTPHONE OWNER (SMARTPHONE=1) [N=4,801]:

Thinking specifically about your personal smartphone…

ASK IF SMARTPHONE OWNER (SMARTPHONE=1) [N=4,801]:

SPACCESS   Do you use a passcode, fingerprint, face recognition, or other security feature to unlock your smartphone?

May 15-21, 2023	
83	Yes, I do
16	No, I do not
1	No answer

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[15] In the June 2019 survey, the responses were slightly different, reading "Yes" and "No." For consistency with that survey, in this table based on all adults, "no" includes those who do not use the internet.

ASK IF SMARTPHONE OWNER (SMARTPHONE=1) [N=4,801]:
UPDATEPREF   How do you typically handle software updates for each of the following? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

		I set them to update automatically	I update them when I'm notified, as soon as it's convenient	I update them when I'm notified, but only when I am required to	I never install updates	No answer
a.	Your smartphone operating system					
	May 15-21, 2023	42	37	17	3	1
b.	Specific apps on your smartphone					
	May 15-21, 2023	40	34	21	4	1

ASK ALL:
PRIVACYREG   How much do you feel you understand the laws and regulations that are currently in place to protect your data privacy?

May 15-21, 2023		Jun 3-17, 2019
3	A great deal	3
24	Some	33
51	Very little	49
21	Not at all	14
*	No answer	*

ASK ALL:
GOVREGV1   How much government regulation do you think there should be of what companies can do with their customers' personal information? **[RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 AND 2, WITH OPTION 3 ALWAYS LAST]**[16]

May 15-21, 2023		Jun 3-17, 2019
72	More regulation than now	75
7	Less regulation than now	8
18	About the same amount as now	16
3	No answer	1

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[16] In the June 2019 survey, the question wording did not include "than now" or "as now" in the response options.

KIDPRIV1   How concerned are you about each of the following? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

		Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned	No answer
a.	Advertisers using data about what children do online to target ads to them					
	May 15-21, 2023	51	34	10	3	1
b.	Online games or gaming apps tracking what children are doing on them					
	May 15-21, 2023	48	35	11	4	1
c.	Social media sites and apps knowing personal information about children					
	May 15-21, 2023	59	30	8	3	1

KIDPRIV2   How much responsibility do you think each of the following should have for protecting children's digital privacy? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

		A great deal of responsibility	Some responsibility	Very little responsibility	No responsibility at all	No answer
a.	The government					
	May 15-21, 2023	46	39	10	5	1
b.	Technology companies					
	May 15-21, 2023	59	32	5	3	1
c.	Parents					
	May 15-21, 2023	85	10	3	1	1

ASK IF FORM 1 (XFORM=1) [N=2,538]:
ACCPTLWF1   How acceptable do you think it is for law enforcement to do each of the following during a criminal investigation? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

		Very acceptable	Somewhat acceptable	Somewhat unacceptable	Very unacceptable	Not sure	No answer
a.	Obtain footage from cameras people install at their residences, like video doorbells						
	May 15-21, 2023	41	32	9	9	7	1
b.	Require third parties to turn over users' private chats, messages or calls						
	May 15-21, 2023	24	30	18	15	11	1
c.	Break the passcode on a user's phone to get access to its contents						
	May 15-21, 2023	25	29	17	18	11	1
d.	Use information from cell phone towers to track where someone is						
	May 15-21, 2023	43	31	10	7	8	1

ASK IF FORM 2 (XFORM=2) [N=2,563]:
ACCPTLWF2   How acceptable do you think it is for law enforcement to do each of the following during a criminal investigation where public safety is at risk? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

		Very acceptable	Somewhat acceptable	Somewhat unacceptable	Very unacceptable	Not sure	No answer
a.	Obtain footage from cameras people install at their residences, like video doorbells						
	May 15-21, 2023	43	30	10	10	6	*
b.	Require third parties to turn over users' private chats, messages or calls						
	May 15-21, 2023	28	31	16	15	10	*
c.	Break the passcode on a user's phone to get access to its contents						
	May 15-21, 2023	30	31	13	18	9	1
d.	Use information from cell phone towers to track where someone is						
	May 15-21, 2023	47	30	10	8	5	*

ASK ALL:
Artificial intelligence (AI) is designed to learn tasks that humans typically do, for instance recognizing speech or pictures.

AI_HEARD   How much have you heard or read about AI?[17]

May 15-21, 2023		Dec 12-18, 2022
27	A lot	26
60	A little	59
13	Nothing at all	15
*	No answer	*

ASK IF HEARD A LOT OR A LITTLE ABOUT AI (AI_HEARD=1,2) [N=4,566]:
AIPRIV2   As companies use AI to collect and analyze personal details and information, do you think this information will be used in ways… **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS; RANDOMLY DISPLAY RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-4 OR 4-1, WITH 5 ALWAYS LAST]**

		Definitely will happen	Probably will happen	Probably will not happen	Definitely will not happen	Not sure	No answer
a.	People would not be comfortable with						
	May 15-21, 2023	40	41	8	3	7	*
b.	That were not originally intended						
	May 15-21, 2023	44	36	8	3	9	*
c.	That could make people's lives easier						
	May 15-21, 2023	14	48	20	7	10	*

ASK IF HEARD A LOT OR A LITTLE ABOUT AI (AI_HEARD=1,2) [N=4,566]:
AIPRIV3   How much do you trust companies to make responsible decisions about how they use AI in their products?

May 15-21, 2023	
2	A great deal
22	Some
41	Very little
30	Not at all
6	Not sure
*	No answer

ASK ALL:
PARTY   In politics today, do you consider yourself a:
ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY=3,4) OR MISSING:
PARTYLN   As of today do you lean more to…[18]

Republican	Democrat	Independent	Something else	No answer	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
28	28	27	15	2	18	19

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[17] AI_HEARD was also asked in a subsequent survey fielded prior to this report's publication. Read the August report for those findings.
[18] PARTY and PARTYLN asked in a prior survey.