

Brainstorming Privacy Surveys: *The Great American Privacy Makeover Undressed*

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Presentation and related materials are online at amishrabbbit.com/cfp

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Why a Survey About Privacy?

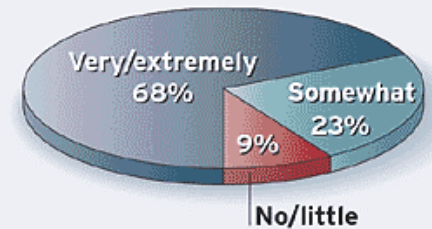
We surveyed *PC World* readers, and other PC users with Internet access, to **identify where participants lack understanding of good privacy practices and security measures**. The results of this survey were featured in the November 2003 issue of *PC World* as part of the magazine's Privacy/Security feature, **The Great American Privacy Makeover**



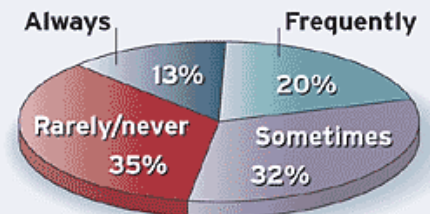
From the November 2003 issue of *PC World*: "An exclusive *PC World* survey reveals that **even savvy Web users can do more to safeguard their privacy** and data. Take the quiz and find out how vulnerable you are; then use our tips to improve your score."

SURVEY SAYS:

Are you concerned about being tracked while Web surfing?



Do you read the full privacy policy?



SOURCE: PC WORLD SURVEY, JUNE, 2003.

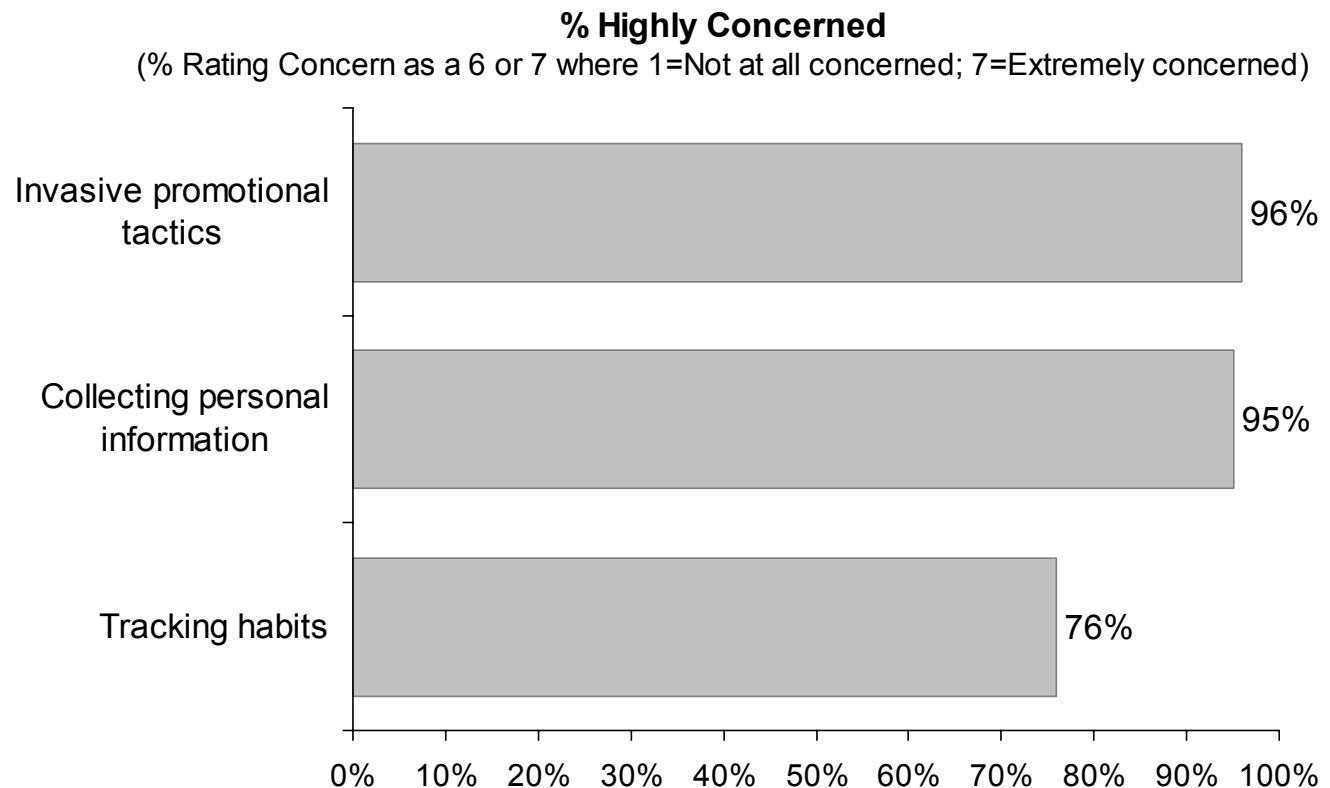
How We Conducted the Survey

- Three categories of invitees were linked to an online form with both multiple choice and open-ended questions about their computer privacy practices and habits.
- **AOL:** OpinionPlace.com, a survey portal owned by AOL, sent out notices about the survey to its volunteer survey-takers starting on Friday, June 27, 2003.
- **PCWorld.com visitors** were presented with a pop-up invitation to take the survey.
- **PC World subscribers**, 15,000 in total, received an e-mailed invitation to join the survey.
- Our goal was to get 500 completed questionnaires from each group.
- The survey launched on Friday, June 27 and reached its goal on July 7, 2003.
- A total of 1,500 individuals responded to the survey. The margin of error for this sample size is +/- 2.5 percentage points.

Participant Concerns About Website Practices

People Just Want to be Left Alone

We asked participants to rate how concerned they are about common Web site practices and technologies that affect personal privacy, such as mandatory registration, pop up advertising, and Web bugs and cookies.

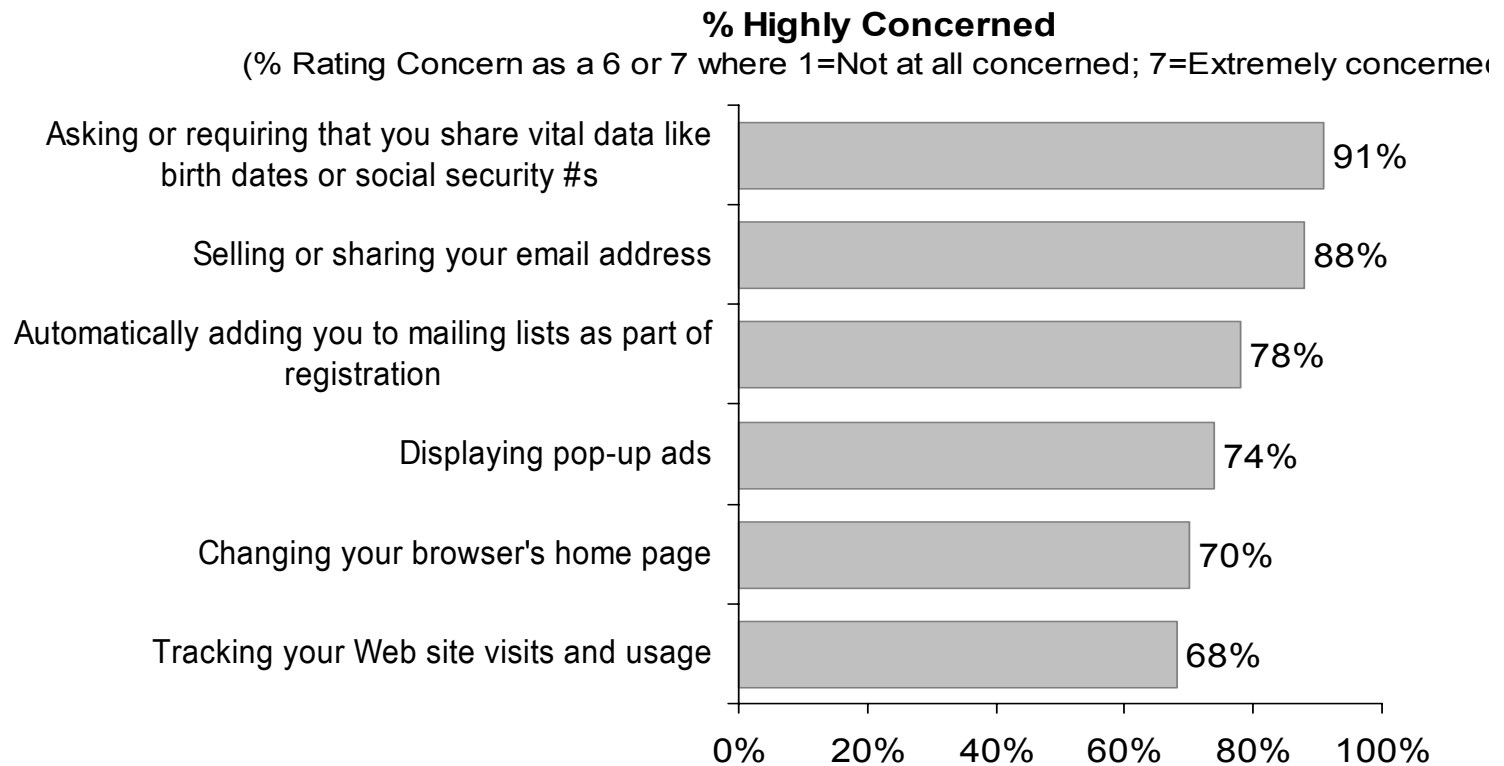


Source: PC World Privacy & Security Survey, June/July 2003
Base: 1,500 PC users

Participant Concerns About Website Practices

The Top 6 Concerns

For this part of the survey, people were asked how concerned they are about a number of activities a Web site or online business might engage in. Generalized worry about identity theft, fraud, and spam seem to dominate the responses.

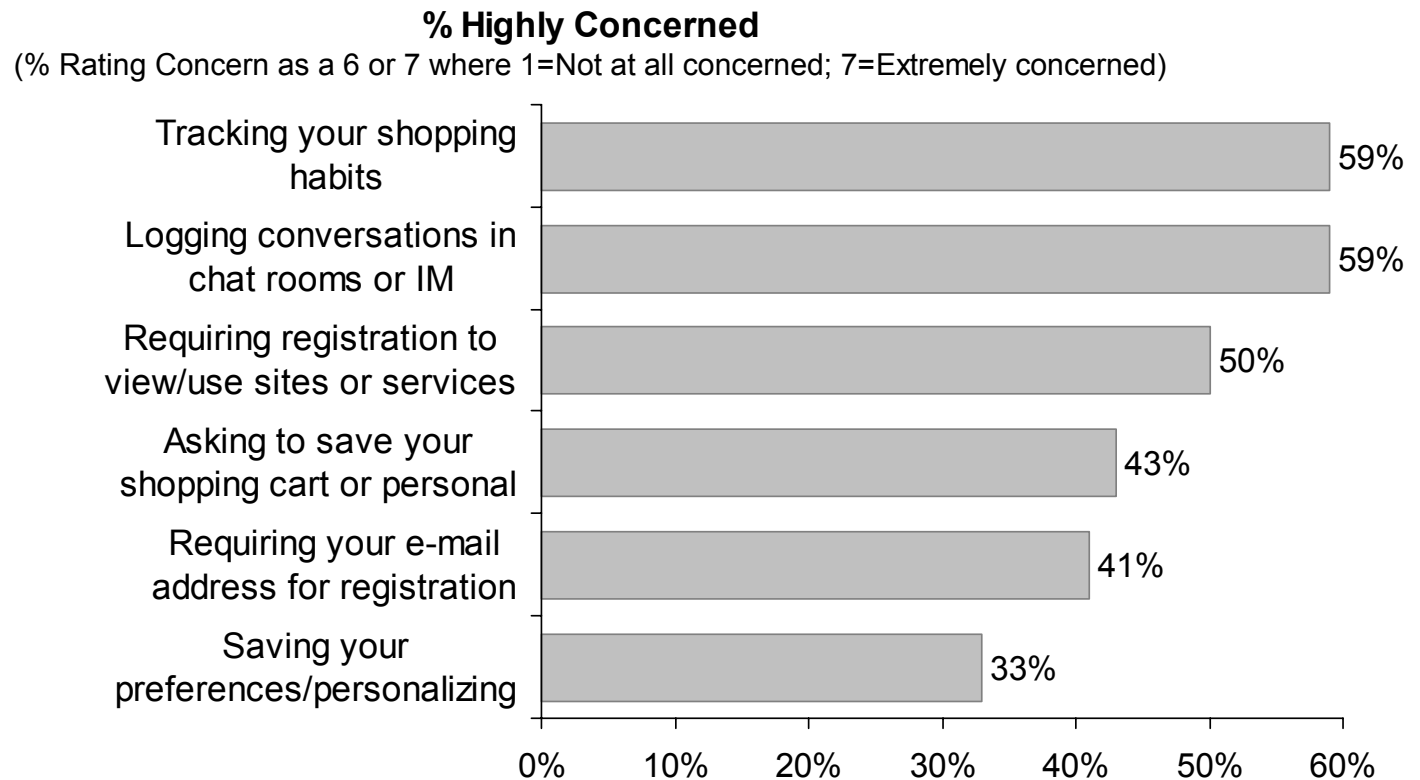


Source: PC World Privacy & Security Survey, June/July 2003
Base: 1,500 PC users

“Less Worrisome” Website Practices

“Bottom 6” Concerns

Fewer survey participants worried about personalization, user data persistence (such as with shopping carts or wishlists), or providing e-mail addresses for registration than they did about the practices listed on the previous slide.



Source: PC World Privacy & Security Survey, June/July 2003
Base: 1,500 PC users

How Different Sample Groups Responded Differently

Significant Variation Between AOL & PCW

When we looked at the results for the “How concerned are you about the following practices” question, it turns out that the more you know, the more you worry about violations of your online privacy. *PC World* readers tend to rate themselves as very technically sophisticated.

Significant differences among the sample groups

PC World subscribers and PCWorld.com visitors registered **significantly higher levels of concern** than AOL users regarding the following Web site practices:

- Asking/requiring site-users to share vital data (birth dates, social security numbers, etc)*
- Selling or sharing site-user e-mail addresses*
- Automatically adding site-users to mailing lists as part of registration
- Changing site-user’s browser home page*
- Tracking site-user’s Website visits and usage*
- Tracking site-user’s shopping habits
- Logging conversations conducted in chat rooms or via instant messaging

Note: * denote areas where *PC World* subscribers also reported significantly higher levels of concern than PCWorld.com visitors

The More You Know, The More Paranoid You Become

How Results Skewed by PC Proficiency

Each participant was asked to self-assess whether they were a beginner, intermediate, or advanced computer user. Participants who rated themselves as more advanced users exhibited concern over different privacy-invasive practices by Web sites than did novice users.

Significant differences by PC Proficiency

- Professional PC-users report a significantly higher level of concern than novice PC-users regarding the following Website practices :
 - Selling or sharing site-user's e-mail addresses
 - Changing site-user's browser home page
- Novice PC-users register a significantly higher level of concern than professional PC-users regarding the practice of *saving site-user's preferences (personalizing the site without their consent)*.
- Novice PC-users register a significantly higher level of concern than advanced PC-users regarding the practices of: *requiring site-user's e-mail addresses for registration, asking site-users to save shopping cart or personal information for later use and requiring registration to view or use sites & services.*

If You Use the Web a Lot, You Worry More About Privacy

Varying Levels of Internet Usage Affect Results

We asked users to let us know how much time they spend online every week. The heaviest Internet users, who spend more than 40 hours a week online, were more concerned about more kinds of practices than were light or moderate Internet users.

Significant differences by Internet Usage

Very heavy Internet-users report a significantly higher level of concern than light Internet-users regarding the following Web site practices:

- Selling or sharing site-user's e-mail addresses
- Displaying pop-up ads*
- Changing site-user's browser home page*
- Tracking site-user Website visits and usage*
- Logging conversations conducted in chat rooms or via instant messaging

Note: * denotes areas where moderate, heavy and very heavy Internet-users all reported significantly higher levels of concern than light Internet-users

Kids Change the Equation

Respondents With Children Had Somewhat Different Concerns

Only a fraction of the respondents with Internet access at home indicated they had a child under the age of 18 in the house. Parents were more concerned with tracking and data mining than the sample group as a whole.

Significant differences between respondents with and without children who have Internet access :

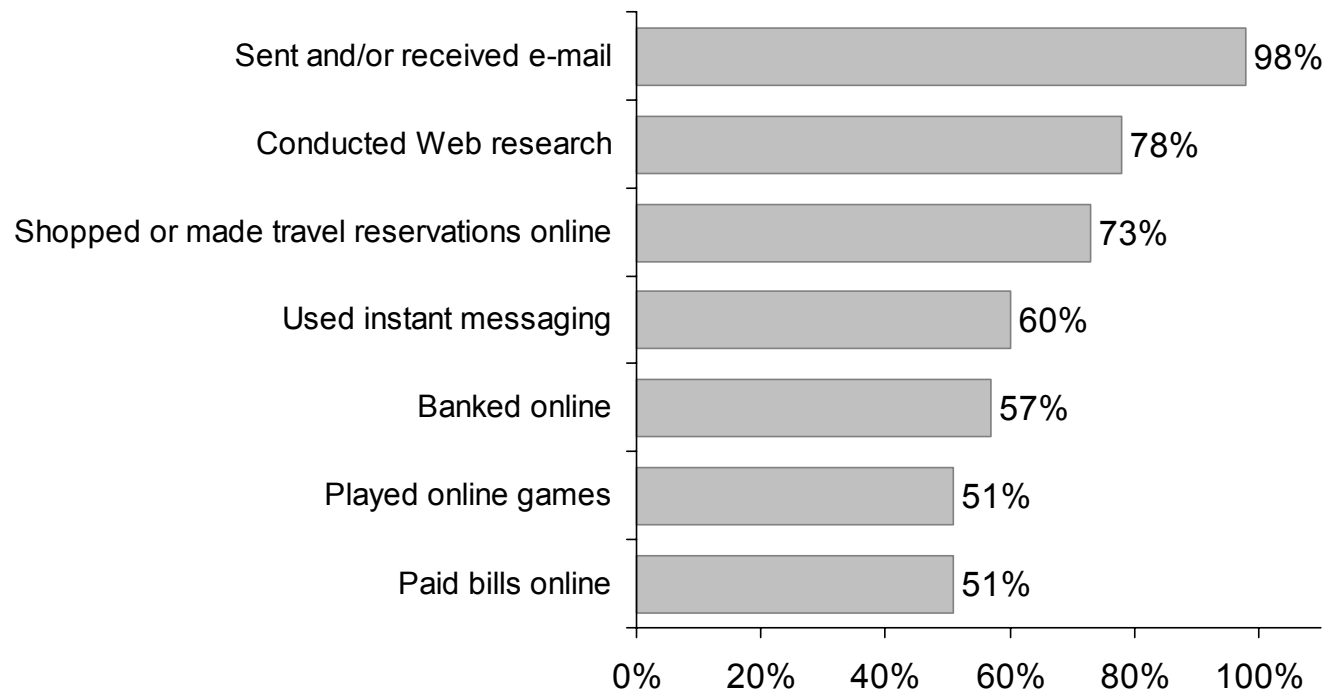
Surprisingly, respondents who do not have children with Internet access report significantly higher levels of concern than those with children who have Internet access regarding the following Web site practices:

- Asking or requiring site-users to share vital data (birth dates/ social security numbers, etc.)
- Selling or sharing site-user's e-mail addresses
- Automatically adding site-users to mailing lists as part of registration
- Displaying pop-up ads
- Changing site-user's browser home page
- Tracking site-user's Website visits and usage
- Tracking site-user's shopping habits

Computer-Related Activities During the Past Year

Or: What do you do when you're online?

Participants could answer as many of these multiple choices as they wanted.

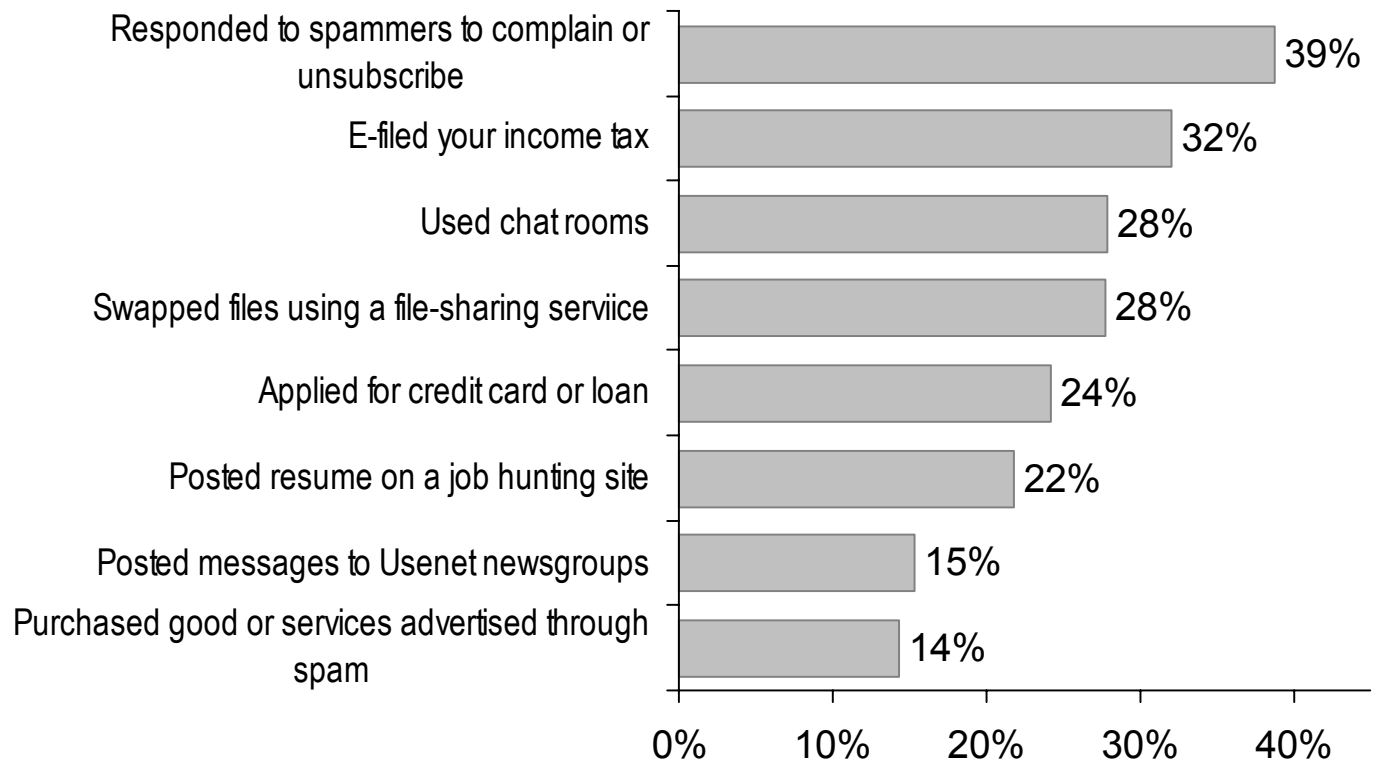


Source: PC World Privacy & Security Survey, June/July 2003
Base: 1,500 PC users

Less Common Online Activities

Or: Sure, I'll Take a Case of That Herbal Viagra Stuff

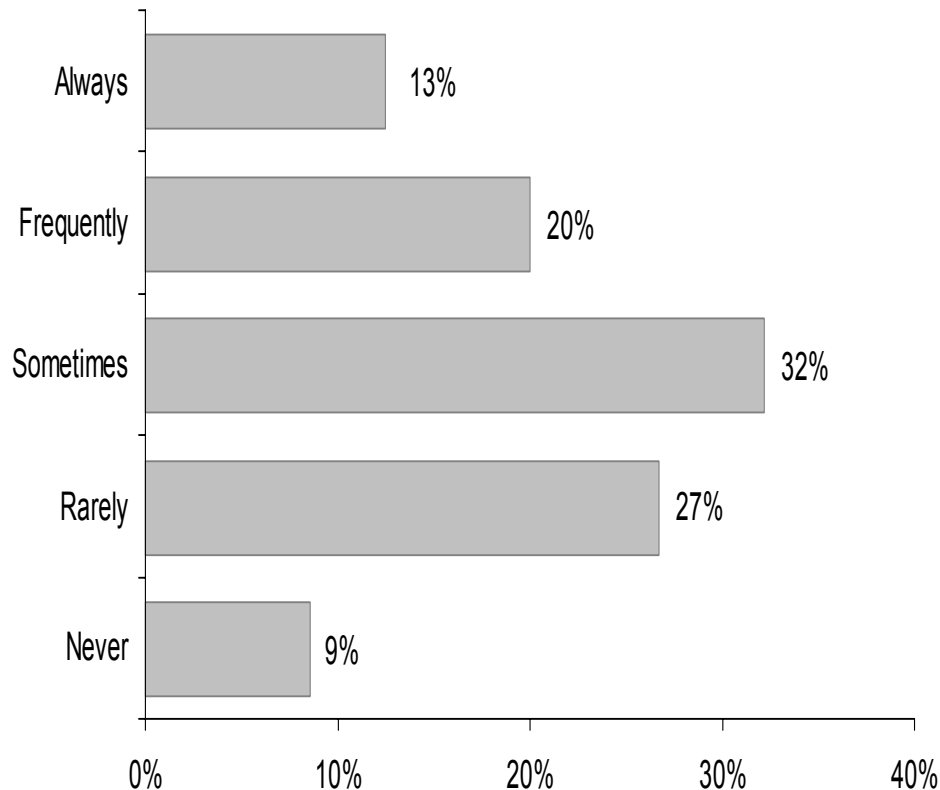
It wasn't clear whether people made a distinction between "real" spam and marketing mail from legitimate companies, but a lot of people said they bought stuff from a spammer.



Source: PC World Privacy & Security Survey, June/July 2003
Base: 1,500 PC users

Website Privacy Policies: Novices Read Everything

We asked people who took the survey how often they read most or all of the privacy policy of a Website or online service when they signed up.



- AOL-users, novice PC-users and light Internet-users are **more likely** to always read all or most of a Web site's privacy policy.
- The most common reason respondents give for not reading privacy policies is that "**the privacy policies are usually too long**" (63%).
- Most users (72%) said they'd decline to use a site or service if they disliked the terms of a privacy policy. However, only **4%** of the respondents indicate that they will both **decline** to use the site **and complain** to the company as well.

We Asked About Spam

“Please tell us the average number of spam e-mails (unsolicited commercial messages) you receive each day, on the account you use the most often.”

- On average, respondents receive a total of 21 spam e-mails per day on their primary account.*
- PC World subscribers receive a significantly higher number of daily spam messages (25) on average than PCWorld.com visitors (20) or AOL users (18).
- Unsurprisingly, professional PC users and very heavy Internet users receive an average of 10-12 more spam e-mails per day than novice PC users and light Internet users.

* NOTE: AOL and several other national ISPs have technologies in place to screen for, and remove, spam before it reaches individual inboxes.

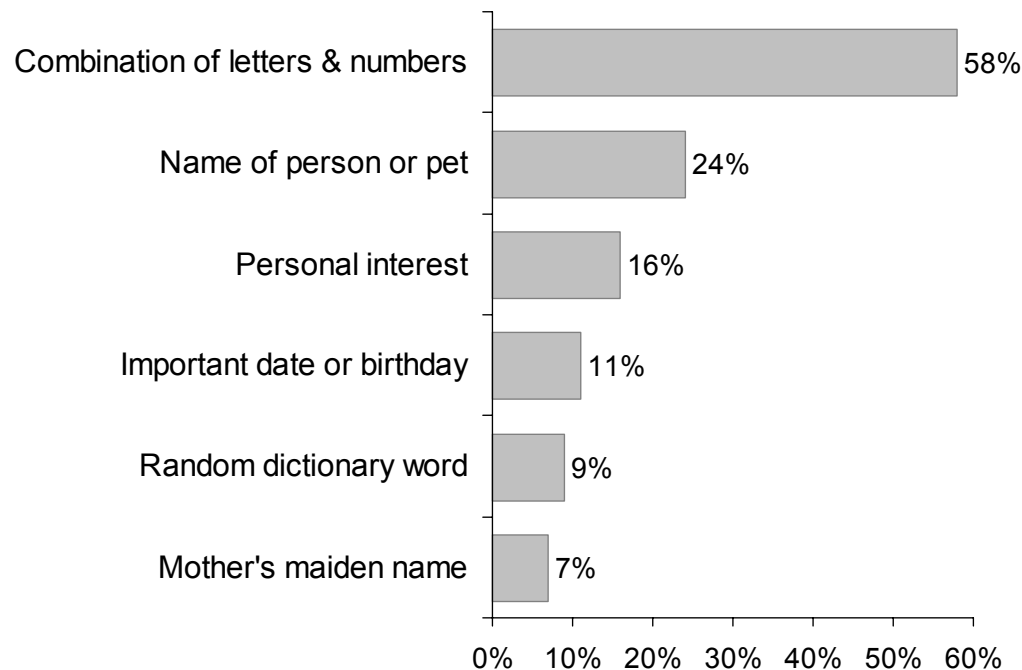
Online Account & Password Usage

We asked participants how many Internet accounts (such as e-mail, chatrooms, message boards, online banking, shopping sites, etc) they have that require passwords, and to tell us how many unique passwords they use. Their answers significantly affected the Privacy Quotient.

- Overall, respondents report that they hold an average of 14 Internet accounts (an average of 20 among *PC World* subscribers), and that they use an average of 7 unique passwords for their various Internet accounts (an average of 10 for *PC World* subscribers).
- Both *PC World* subscribers and PCWorld.com visitors hold a significantly higher number of Internet accounts and use a significantly higher number of unique passwords than AOL users.
- Not surprisingly, the higher respondents' proficiency with PCs and/or level of Internet usage, the more Internet accounts and unique passwords they have.

Where People Get Ideas For Their Passwords

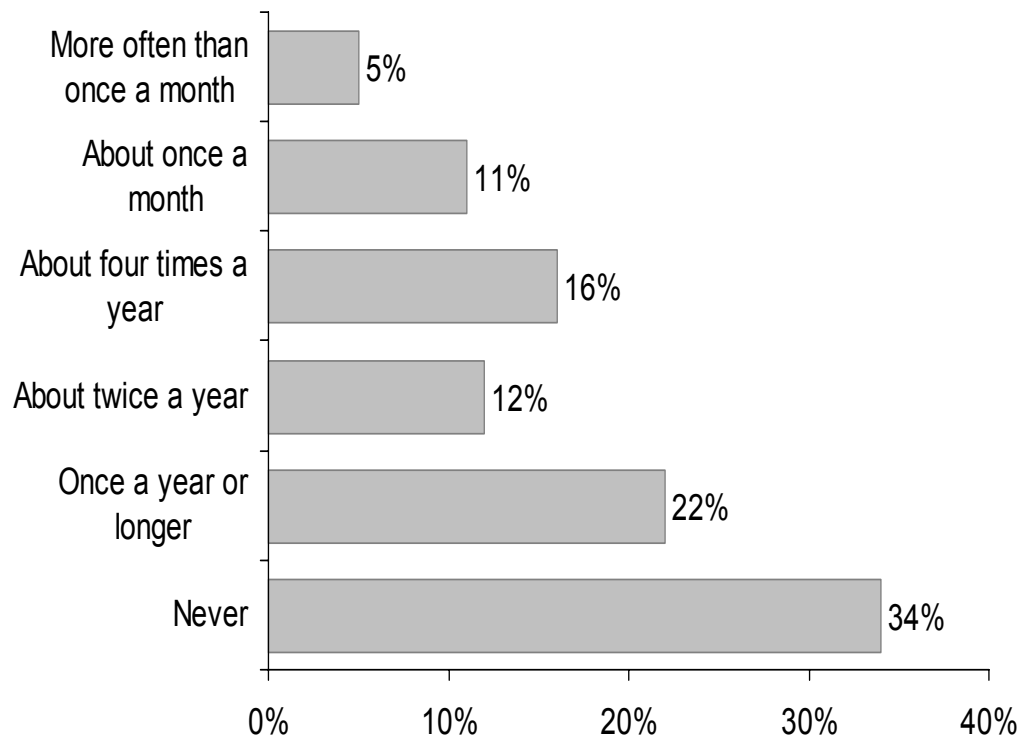
Participants could check off one or more of the following responses. We're not sure whether they understood that the first option meant a *random combination* of letters and numbers.



■ A significantly higher percentage of light Internet-users (21%) compared to other users report that they use “an *important date or birthday*”.

How Often Do You Change Your Passwords?

Users who changed their passwords more frequently gained points on their Privacy Quotient.

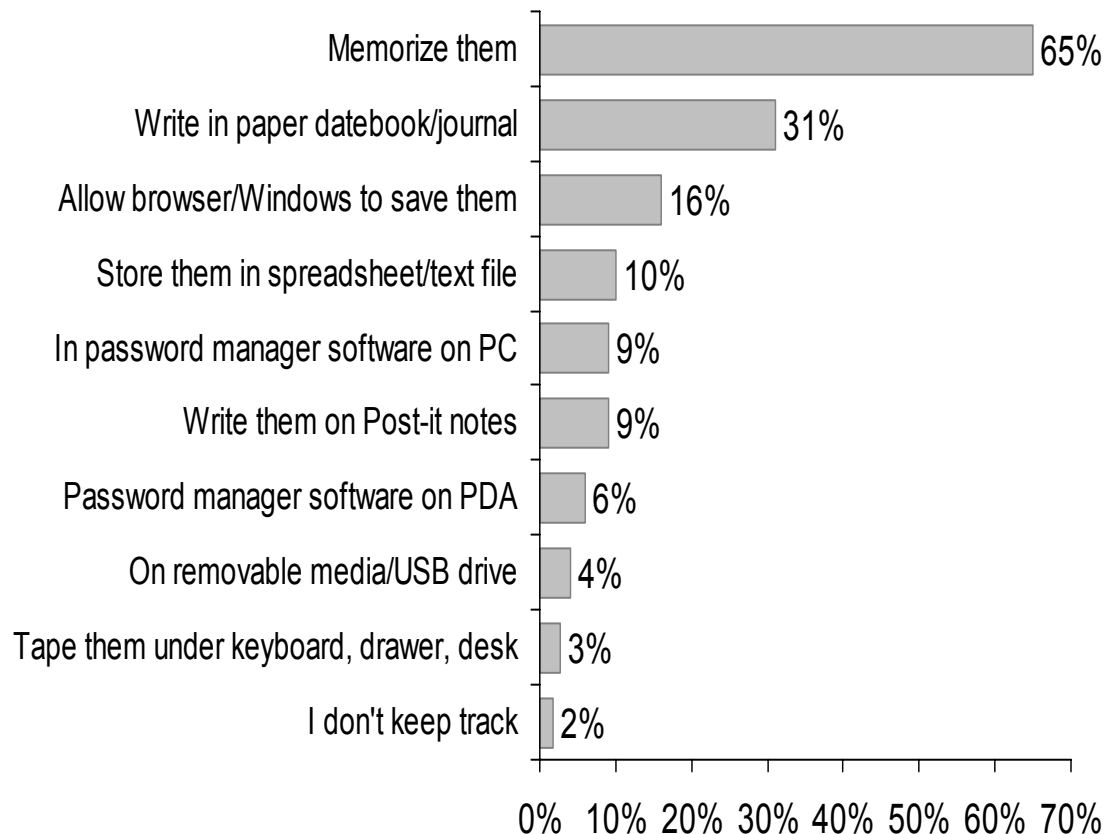


- The propensity to never change a password is highest among AOL users, novice/intermediate PC users, and light/moderate Internet users.
- Respondents who do not change their most commonly used passwords more often than once a year cite *it is hard to keep track* (54%) as their reason for not changing their passwords more frequently.

Source: PC World Privacy & Security Survey, June/July 2003
Base: 1,500 PC users

How Do You Keep Track Of Your Passwords?

The survey allowed participants to answer more than one choice from the list below.

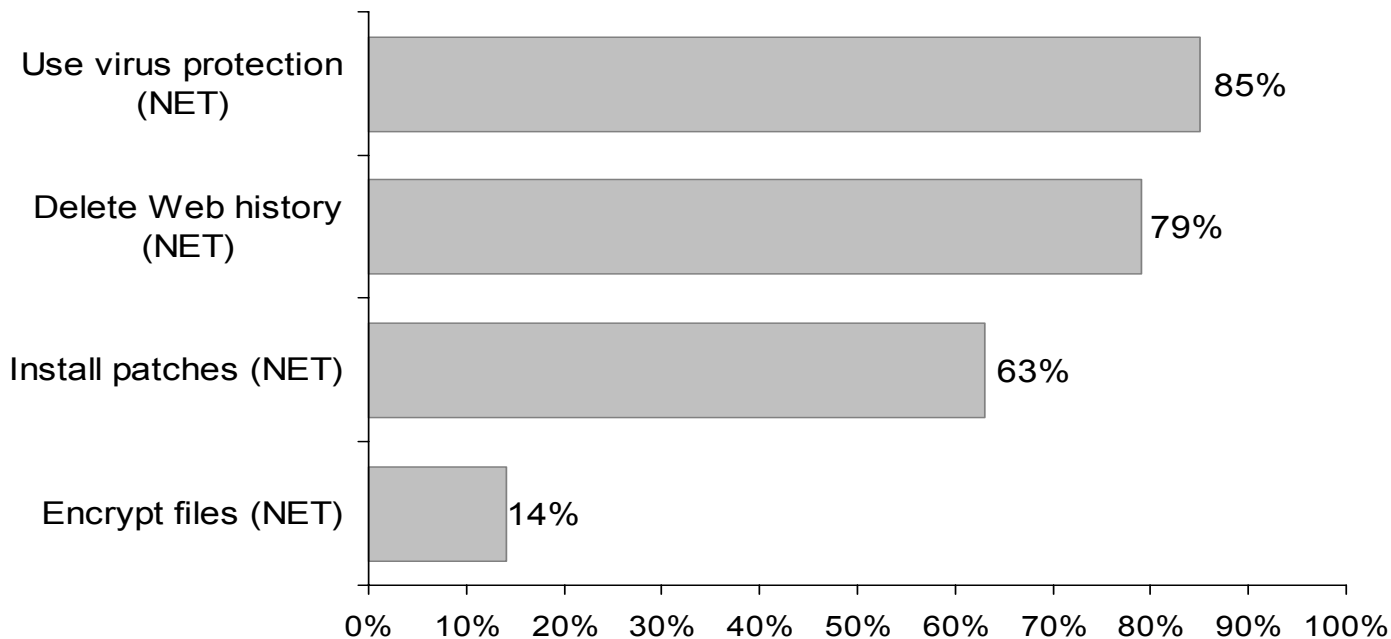


- A significantly higher percentage of both AOL users (70%) and PCWorld.com visitors (71%) report that **they memorize their passwords** as compared to *PC World* subscribers (55%).
- Professional and advanced PC users and heavy and very heavy Internet users are significantly more likely than other respondents to report that they **store their passwords electronically**.

Security Measures Taken at Work and Home

All Security Activities Categorized Into 4 Groups

We asked about a number of computer-security maintenance chores people might do. These are the aggregated results from all users.

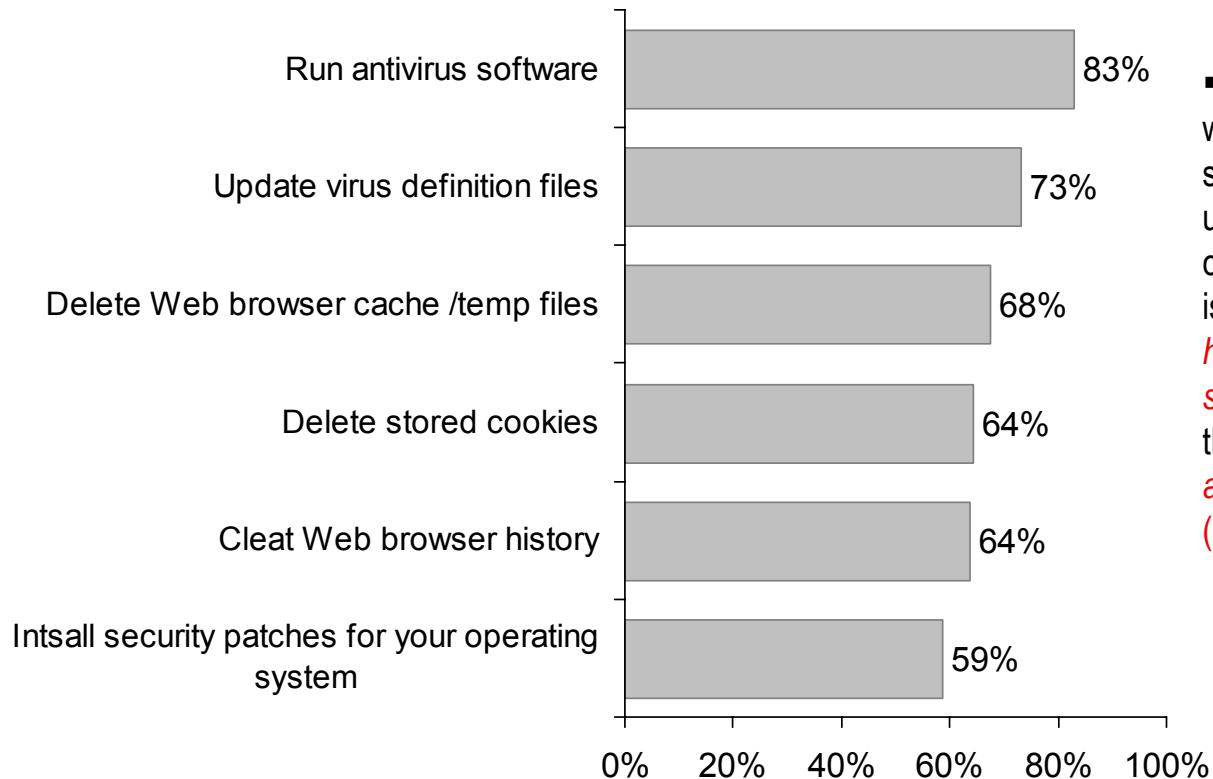


Source: PC World Privacy & Security Survey, June/July 2003
Base: 1,500 PC users

Security Measures Taken at Work and Home

Top 6 Security Measures

We deducted points from the Privacy Quotient if the respondent indicated that they failed to do some of these basic computer security tasks on their PC.

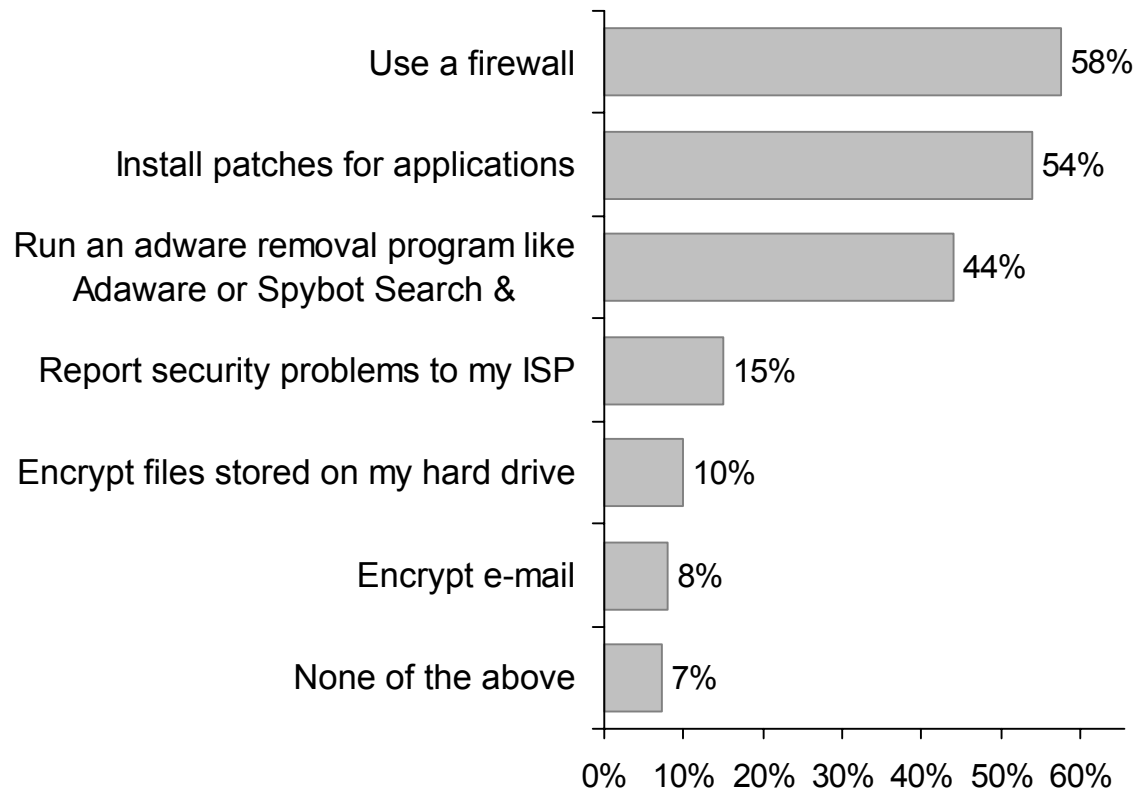


■ Among respondents who do not run antivirus software (primarily AOL users), the most commonly cited reason is that they *“don’t know how to use the software”* (24%) or that they *“can’t afford to buy an antivirus package”* (20%).

Almost Nobody Uses Encryption for Files or Mail

More Security Measures Continued from the Previous Page

It's interesting to note that only a fraction of respondents use encryption, and only slightly more ever let their ISP know about a virus infection or some other kind of security problem.



■ One out of 5 novice PC-users (23%) and AOL users (20%), and two out of five light Internet-users indicate that **they never do or use any of this stuff!**

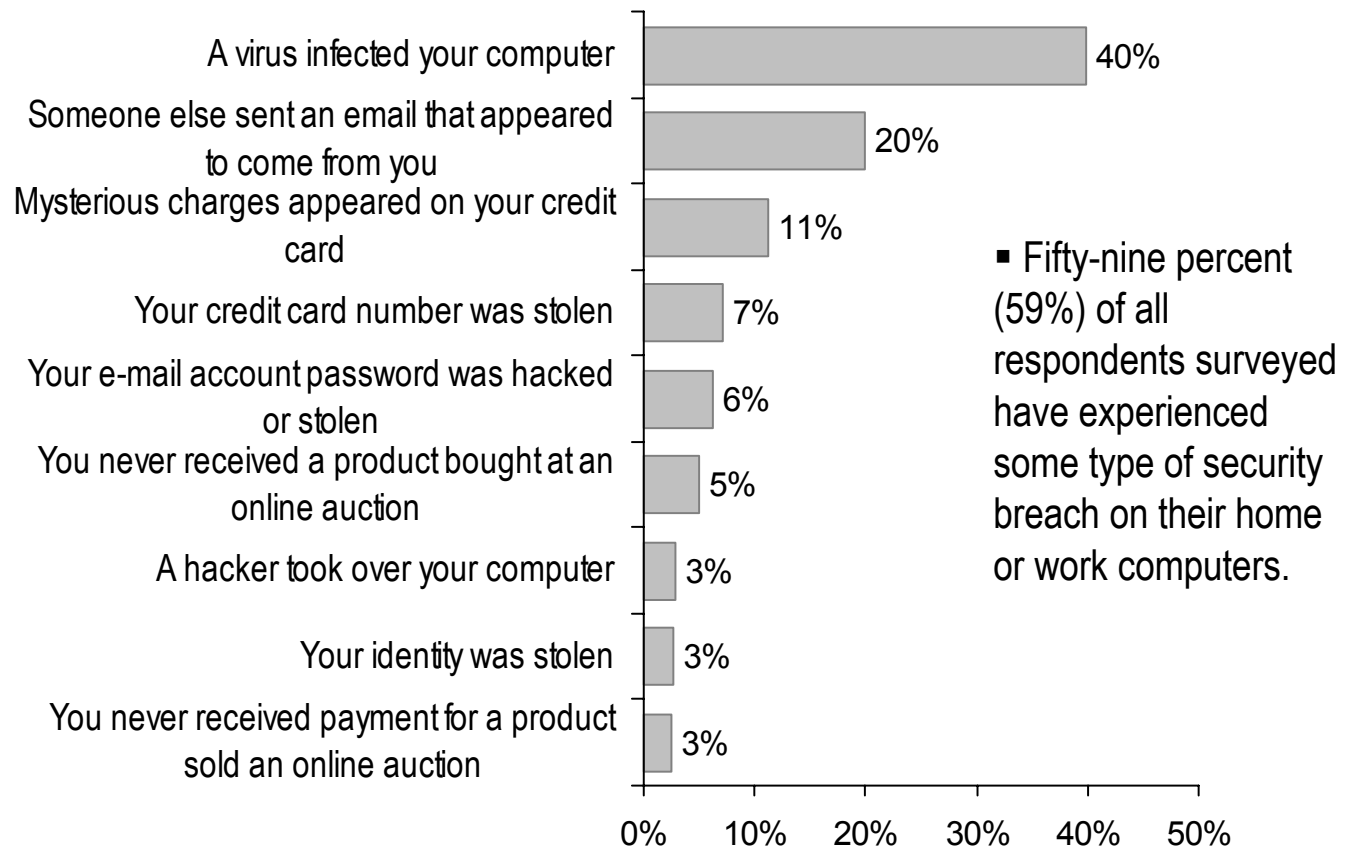
How Parents Supervise Their Children's Internet Use

We asked about a range of ways parents can keep tabs on their kids, from sitting with them while the kids are online, to content filtering, to the use of privacy-invasive keystroke logger and remote-monitoring software. These answers didn't affect their Privacy Quotient.

- One third of those surveyed (34%) report that they have children in their household with Internet access.
- Of these respondents, 55% report that they set rules or limits regarding Internet access, and 51% talk with their children about what they may and may not do while on the Internet.
- Twenty-two percent (22%) of these respondents currently use some type of software to filter offensive content or to help monitor their children's Internet usage (such as software that can track Web sites and chat rooms visited, or software that records all keystrokes on the child's computer).

Security Breaches Experienced at Work or Home

Answers didn't affect the Privacy Quotient. We were just curious!



Source: PC World Privacy & Security Survey, June/July 2003
Base: 1,500 PC users

Discussion Questions: Improving These Surveys

Some of the issues I'd like to discuss:

- Was scoring fair? Under scrutiny, it's clear that a relatively high percentage of points were awarded (or withheld) based on a single behavior: Creating lots of unique passwords. How important are strong passwords in maintaining online privacy?
- Is Spam worth discussing? Slide 15 details the results of a question about how much spam users get. Is this relevant to personal privacy?
- How a respondent answered the question about Web site policies (on slide 14) determined whether they deducted points from or added points to their final Privacy Quotient score. Should a question be able to swing the results both ways, or should they be binary, with answers only able to change the point value in one direction, or not at all?

More Sources for Privacy News and Info on PCWorld.com

Locations where you can find regular privacy coverage on our site:

- Monthly Columns (some are only available online):
 - **Privacy Watch** (find.pcworld.com/42108).
 - **Internet Tips** (find.pcworld.com/42110).
 - **Tech.gov** (find.pcworld.com/42112).
 - **Answer Line** (find.pcworld.com/42114).
 - **Consumer Watch** (find.pcworld.com/42116).
 - **Spam Slayer** (find.pcworld.com/42118).
 - **The Human Element** (find.pcworld.com/42120).
- Privacy topic page: A listing of all stories we've published that bear on privacy issues, going back five years. (find.pcworld.com/42122).
- The *Privacy Makeover* story (find.pcworld.com/42124).

Acknowledgements

People I'd like to thank

- The CFP 2004 Program Committee.
- PC World Research Director Lisa Huck.
- PC World editors Ed Albro and Anush Yegyzarian.
- Our willing recipients of a “privacy makeover:” E. Webb Bassick (Chicago), Kevin Watts (Indianapolis), and Mario Sanon (New York).