



CYBERSECURITY

Canadian Post-Secondary Students Feelings about Cybersecurity Survey Results

Methodology

These are the findings of a survey conducted by Angus Reid Forum on behalf of ISA Cybersecurity from September 15– 20, 2022 among a sample of 353 Canadian post-secondary students. The survey was conducted in English and French. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 5.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.



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Summary

- In general, students have a high level of concern when it comes to cyber safety, with three-quarters (76%) saying they are very or somewhat concerned. Nearly all students surveyed (96%) say it is important for students to learn about cyber safety.
- Concern with cyber safety has increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to COVID-19, students surveyed (66%) were 10% less likely to say they were concerned about cyber safety. Additionally, three-in-five say their thoughts about cyber safety have changed since the pandemic.
- Students surveyed are split as to whether they feel prepared to protect themselves from cyber attacks. Half (52%) feel prepared, and half (48%) do not. Men (60%) are significantly more likely than women (46%) to feel prepared for a cyber attack.
- About two-thirds (63%) of students surveyed have taken steps to minimize their risk of cyber attacks when using their computer or mobile phone for online learning. These steps include increasing their computers' security features (70%), following guidelines put out by their academic institution (49%), and reading articles or books on how to minimize their risk (29%).
- While the majority are taking steps to reduce their risk, one-quarter (26%) of students surveyed say they don't think twice about providing personal information online to their university or college.
- Four-in-five (79%) students surveyed feel the school should be responsible for protecting university/college students from cyber attacks. With this said, 44% do not feel their school provides enough training and resources to help ensure their personal information is safe from cyber threats. One-in-three (31%) are not confident their university/college keeps their data secure and protected from hackers.
- More than half (55%) of students surveyed are concerned about their school experiencing a data breach and their personal information being exposed. Nearly half (46%) say it would influence their decision to attend a university/college if the school was known to have experienced a data breach or had a reputation for weak cyber security.

Q1. How concerned are you about cyber safety (protecting your personal data from online threats or attacks)?

Very concerned	20%
Somewhat concerned	56%
Not very concerned	21%
Not at all concerned	3%

Q2. How concerned were you about cyber safety (protecting your personal data from online threats or attacks) prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Very concerned	16%
Somewhat concerned	50%
Not very concerned	29%
Not at all concerned	5%

Q3. Have your thoughts about cyber safety changed since the pandemic?

Yes, I've heard more stories of businesses and organizations that store people's personal data being hacked since the pandemic started.	30%
Yes, with the rise in online learning, I'm more aware of the importance of my academic institution keeping my data safe.	29%
Yes, with the rise in online learning, I'm more aware of the importance of keeping my data safe.	28%
Yes, I'm more worried about having my private information stolen from my academic institution.	15%
No, they have not changed.	39%

Q4. How prepared do you feel you are to protect yourself from a cyber attack?

Very well prepared	12%
Somewhat prepared	40%
Not very prepared	40%
Not prepared at all	8%

Q5. Have you taken steps in the last two years to minimize your risk of becoming a cyber threat victim when using your computer or mobile phone for online learning?

Yes	63%
No	37%

Q6. What steps have you taken to minimize your risk of becoming a cyber threat victim when using your computer or mobile phone for online learning?

I've increased my computer's security features.	70%
I've followed guidelines put out by my academic institution.	49%
I've read articles/books on how to minimize the risk of becoming a cybersecurity victim.	29%
I've asked friends and family for advice.	25%
I've spoken with people in the industry for advice.	17%
I've taken seminar(s)/course(s) to learn more.	12%
Other	6%

Q7. What best describes your feelings about sharing private/personal information online with your university/college?

I don't think twice about providing private/personal information online.	26%
I'm not comfortable providing private/personal information, but don't want to have trouble with the school if I don't give them what they are asking for.	47%
I don't provide any private/personal information unless I'm sure it's absolutely required and will be kept secure.	27%

Q8. How important do you think it is for university/college students to learn about cyber safety?

Very important	55%
Somewhat important	41%
Not very important	3%
Not at all important	1%

Q9. Who do you think should be responsible for protecting university/college students from cyberattacks?

The school	79%
Internet providers and software companies	67%
The government	50%
The students	44%
Parents/guardians	5%

Q9B. Who do you think should be most responsible for protecting university/college students from cyberattacks?

The school	46%
Internet providers and software companies	26%
The government	16%
The students	11%
Parents/guardians	1%

Q10. Do you feel your university/college provides enough training and resources for staff and students to help ensure your personal information is safe from cyber threats?

Yes	24%
No	44%
I don't know	31%

Q11. How confident are you that your university/college keeps your data secure and protected from hackers?

Very confident	8%
Somewhat confident	51%
Not very confident	22%
Not at all confident	9%
I never thought about the security of my school's computer systems	10%

Q12. How concerned are you about your school experiencing a data breach and your personal information being exposed?

Very concerned	12%
Somewhat concerned	43%
Not very concerned	33%
Not at all concerned	4%
I never thought about it	8%

Q13. Would it influence your decision to attend a university/college if the school is known to have experienced a data breach or has a reputation for weak cybersecurity?

Yes	46%
No	28%
I don't know	26%

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