



Majority (52%) says they're More Concerned about Online Privacy than they were a Year Ago

Around Six in Ten feel that Social Media (63%) and Search Engines (57%) Have Too Much Power

Toronto, Ontario, May 17th, 2018 — More than half (52%) of internet users around the world are more concerned about their online privacy than they were a year ago, according to a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of the Centre for International Governance Innovation in 25 economies around the world. Further, a majority believes that social media (63%) and search engines (57%) have too much power.

Perhaps given the recent media focus on issues of data ownership and data breaches, a majority (52%) says that they are more concerned about their online privacy compared to a year ago, with growing concern being the greatest in the Latin American countries (63%) and the Middle East/Africa (61%). Among those who are more concerned about their online privacy, three quarters (74%) say that internet companies contribute to that growing concern – second only to cyber criminals (81%) and ahead of other internet users (66%), one's own government (63%), companies in general (61%), foreign governments (58%) or employers (48%). Interestingly, those in the United States (78%) are most likely among the countries polled to point to their own government as a source of rising concern, and are among the most likely (83%) to say that internet companies specifically are a source of this growing concern.

Global internet users also express a high-level of distrust of social media platforms, search engines and internet technology companies with 63% of respondents claiming that social media has too much power. Those in emerging markets such as Nigeria (84%), Egypt (81%) and Kenya (79%) are most likely to agree that social media has too much power, while residents of Russia (40%), Japan (47%) and Poland (49%) are less likely to say so. Six in ten (62%) Americans – where Facebook was recently in the hot-seat with Congressional leaders – believe that social media has too much power, and this data was collected prior to the public revelations of the data breach at Facebook, suggesting that this belief could be more strongly held in the wake of the media attention paid to the issue. Six in ten (58%) Canadians feel social media has too much power.

Given the acknowledged power of these online tools, it is not surprising to hear the degree to which they have an impact on the attitudes and behaviours of those polled. Specifically, 42% believe that social media influences their political point of view – more so than search engines (39%), online apps (35%) or online advertisements (32%). Those living in Indonesia (69%), India (68%) and Egypt (63%) are most likely to say that social media influences their political views, while those in Russia (21%), Japan (28%), Germany (28%), Poland (28%) and Great Britain (29%) are less likely to say so. Moreover, a considerable proportion of global internet users claim that social media makes their life less efficient (37%), harder (29%), or worse (30%) than it would have been otherwise.

Social media isn't the only online source that many people believe wields too much power. A majority (57%) also believes that search engines are too powerful, and half feel the same way about online apps (48%) and online advertisements (49%). Search engines in particular appear to have the greatest degree of influence on internet users, most predominantly on what websites they



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visit (64%), the news they see (60%), the media sites that they visit (58%), what they purchase online (56%), what applications they use (54%), and where they go during their day (43%).

Finally, in response to this increasing concern and distrust of the internet, many around the globe are changing their behaviours online, a trend with economic and societal implications. In fact, around one in ten global internet users are making fewer online purchases (12%), closing social media accounts (10%), or are using the internet less often overall (7%), compared to one year ago.

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This survey was conducted by Ipsos on behalf of the Centre for International Governance Innovation (“CIGI”) between December 29, 2017, and March 5, 2018. The survey was conducted in 25 economies—Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey and the United States—and involved 25,262 Internet users. Twenty-one of the economies utilized the Ipsos Internet panel system while Tunisia was conducted via random-digit telephone dialing, and Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan utilized face-to-face interviewing. In the US and Canada respondents were aged 18-64, and 16-64 in all other economies. Approximately 1,000+ individuals were surveyed in each economy and are weighted to match the population in each economy surveyed. The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval. In this case, a poll of 1,000 is accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points. For those surveys conducted by CATI and face-to-face, the margin of error is +/-3.1, 19 times out of 20.

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