

News Release



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Unisys Security Index Reveals High Concern Among Americans About Government and Business Protection of Private Data

As concerns grow over security of online transactions, majority of Americans are willing to use biometric data such as fingerprints to ensure protection

BLUE BELL, Pa., October 20, 2009 – Only 22 percent of Americans fully trust government agencies to keep personal information secure and private, and the proportion is only slightly better (29 percent) with regard to trust in data protection by financial institutions such as banks, according to research conducted in September by Unisys Corporation (NYSE: UIS).

The findings, part of the latest bi-annual [Unisys Security Index](#), also confirm that most Americans surveyed remain seriously concerned about the security and privacy of their personal information. Nearly two-thirds of Americans are either “extremely” or “very” concerned about identity theft and credit and debit card fraud (65% and 64%, respectively).

Americans who are seriously concerned about the security of their online transactions rose to 42 percent, the highest level since the Unisys Security Index began two years ago.

“Government and business organizations recognize the need to protect the private data citizens entrust to them and to protect themselves from fraud through strong identity

management solutions,” said Anthony Valletta, former assistant Secretary of Defense for C31 and a Fellow at the Unisys Center for Innovation in Government. “These risks have been highlighted through a number of incidents in recent months in which private data was put at risk. For example, a recent report by the Government Accountability Office stated that the IRS recorded more than 51,000 cases of apparent taxpayer identity theft and paid out \$15 million in fraudulent tax refund claims. This new research from Unisys underlines the need and the public’s readiness for technology such as biometrics to address their concerns.”

As concerns grow over data security and identity theft, the majority of Americans (58%) are willing to provide biometric data to merchants and financial institutions to verify and authenticate their identity. Nearly all of those consumers (93%) would be willing to use fingerprint scans, while 79 percent are willing to use iris recognition – an increase of 20 percent and 17 percent, respectively, since consumers were surveyed in November 2008.

“Interestingly, Americans are willing to provide biometric data for identity verification, but we are not seeing the widespread use of biometrics in daily transactions with governments, financial or retail institutions,” said Mark Cohn, vice president of enterprise security, Unisys. “Adoption of interoperable identity management systems and an investment in shared infrastructure would hasten widespread use of biometrics, taking advantage of the technology that’s available today and the public’s growing acceptance of biometrics.”

Overall Results of Latest Wave of Security Index

The Unisys Security Index surveys consumer opinion on four areas of security: financial, national, Internet and personal safety. More than 1,000 Americans responded to the latest survey conducted from September 11-13, 2009. The results are tallied on a scale of 0-300, with 300 representing the highest level of perceived concern.

The overall score for the current Unisys Security Index for the United States was 147, indicating a moderate level of overall security concern. The overall score came in unchanged from the last survey taken in March 2009.

The generally moderate concern expressed by consumers appears to reflect a dichotomy between the public perception of these threats and the actual rise of incidents in recent years. For example, Javelin Research and Strategy reported in February 2009 that approximately 1.8 million more U.S. adults fell victim to identity fraud in 2008, compared to 2007. And a May 2009 survey by Actimize found that approximately 81% of financial services organizations expect an increase this year in ATM/debit card fraud.

“As financial institutions move to near real time transactions, the existing vulnerabilities are being exploited at an alarming rate,” said Patricia Titus, chief information security officer, Unisys Federal Systems. “Not only are the criminals becoming more sophisticated in how they launch attacks, but the unsuspecting consumers become the weakest link – allowing easy exploitation of their private financial data.”

Financial security was the predominant concern of those surveyed in March 2009, but those worries were displaced in last month’s survey by an increase in national security concerns, as well as fears surrounding national health epidemics such as the H1N1 flu outbreak.

In September, 64% of Americans (up from 58% in March) expressed serious concern about national security threats such as the war on terrorism. In addition, nearly 47% of those surveyed (up from 41% in March) are seriously concerned about the threat of a health epidemic.

“American consumers are not as concerned with financial security as they were months ago and are now more focused on national security,” said Cohn. “As consumers perceive that the economic crisis has leveled off, companies and governments may need to reprioritize accordingly to elevate risk management strategies that address longstanding but shifting concern about war and terrorism as well as growing concern about public health.”

Additional findings from the latest U.S. results of the [Unisys Security Index](#) include:

- Americans are divided with regard to concern about computer security; 40 percent are seriously concerned about this issue, while 25 percent are not concerned at all.

- While most Americans feel comfortable about their personal safety, one-third (32%) are seriously concerned about this threat, which is an increase of five percent since 1H09.
- Households earning more than \$75,000 in annual income are more willing to provide biometric data than are adults with smaller household incomes.

About the Unisys Security Index

The Unisys Security Index is a bi-annual global study that provides insights into the attitudes of consumers on a wide range of security related issues. Lieberman Research Group conducted the survey in Brazil, Europe and the U.S.; Newspoll conducted the research in Asia-Pacific. The Unisys Security Index surveys more than 8,500 people in nine countries: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. The study measures consumer perceptions on a scale of zero to 300, with 300 representing the highest level of perceived concern. For more information, visit www.unisyssecurityindex.com.

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