



NEWS RELEASE

## Cisco Study Reveals Critical Role of Privacy Emerging from Global Pandemic

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### News Summary:

- Global study finds significant privacy concerns stemming from the pandemic, fueled by rapid shift to remote work and the need to utilize health information of individuals.
- Privacy legislation worldwide has been well received, with nearly 80% of security and privacy professionals seeing positive impact on their organizations.
- Strong privacy infrastructure and robust security practices are essential for post-pandemic social and economic recovery.

Cisco today published the [2021 Data Privacy Benchmark Study](#), its fourth annual look into corporate privacy practices worldwide, which found enhanced importance of privacy protections during the pandemic and increasing benefits for businesses that adopt strong privacy measures. The independent, anonymized survey analyzed the responses of 4,400 security and privacy professionals across 25 countries and explored attitudes towards privacy legislation and the emergence of privacy metrics being reported to executive management.

At a time of disruption and uncertainty due to the pandemic, people have been suddenly expected, and at times required, to share their personal information to help curtail the spread of COVID19. At the same time, people have shifted much of their lives online, accelerating a trend that normally would have taken years. These mass-scale shifts in human interaction and digital engagement presented many challenging data privacy issues for organizations who aim to follow the law, stop the spread of the pandemic, while also respecting individual rights. Consumers and the general public are growing increasingly concerned about how their personal data is being used.

Other key findings from the report include:

- **Privacy is much more than just a compliance issue as businesses now see it as a fundamental human right and a mission-critical C-suite priority.**
  - 60% of organizations say they weren't prepared for privacy and security requirements involved in the shift to remote work
  - 93% of organizations turned to their privacy teams to help navigate these challenges
  - 87% of consumers expressed concerns about the privacy protections of the tools they needed to use to work, interact and connect remotely
  - 90% of organizations now reporting privacy metrics to their C-suites and boards
- **There is a clear shift in the market towards standardizing privacy as a non-negotiable requirement when digitizing and advancing business objectives.**
  - More than 140 jurisdictions have now passed omnibus privacy laws, and nearly 80% of respondents found these laws to have a positive impact
- **Most people are fine with sharing health information for workplace safety and pandemic response, but are uncomfortable with other uses such as research.**
  - 57% supported employers using data to help make workplaces safe, while less than half supported location tracking, contact tracing, disclosing information about infected individuals, and using individual information for research
- **Privacy and the larger cybersecurity ecosystem will play a key role in the road to economic growth and COVID-19 pandemic recovery.**
  - As economies and communities begin to recover, many important challenges will arise that will test how governments, companies, and individuals collect, manage and protect personal data while balancing individual rights with public interest
- **Privacy investment continues to be attractive, with 75% of organizations seeing significant business value in terms of mitigating security losses, enhanced agility and innovation, improved operational efficiency, and improved customer loyalty and trust**
  - Over one-third of organizations are getting benefits at least twice their investment

"Privacy has come of age – recognized as a fundamental human right and rising to a mission-critical priority for executive management," noted Cisco Vice President and Chief Privacy Officer, Harvey Jang. "And with the accelerated move to work from anywhere, privacy has taken on greater importance in driving digitization, corporate resiliency, agility, and innovation."

#### **Additional Resources:**

- [Privacy Comes of Age During the Pandemic](#)
- [Cisco Trust Center](#)
- [Cisco Security Report Series](#)

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