



Office of the
Privacy Commissioner
of Canada

Commissariat
à la protection de
la vie privée du Canada

2022-23 Survey of Canadians on Privacy-Related Issues

Executive Summary

Prepared for the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada

Supplier Name: Phoenix SPI

Contract Number: CW2244278

Award Date: 2022-10-12

Contract Value: \$69,928.58 (including applicable taxes)

Delivery Date: 2023-03-08

Registration Number: POR 060-22

For more information, please contact: publications@priv.gc.ca

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

Canada 

2022-23 Survey of Canadians on Privacy-Related Issues

Executive Summary

Prepared for the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada

Supplier name: Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc.

This public opinion research report presents the results of a telephone survey conducted by Phoenix SPI on behalf of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada. The fieldwork for the research study was conducted with 1,500 Canadians, aged 16 and older, between November 23 and December 18, 2022.

This publication may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes only. Prior written permission must be obtained from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada. For more information on this report, please contact the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada at: publications@priv.gc.ca or at:

Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
30, Victoria Street
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 1H3

Catalogue Number: IP54-109/2023E-PDF

International Standard Book Number (ISBN): 978-0-660-48840-0

Related publications (POR registration number: POR 060-22):

Catalogue number (Final report, French): IP54-109/2023F-PDF

ISBN: 978-0-660-48841-7

Aussi offert en français sous le titre Sondage auprès des Canadiens sur les enjeux liés à la protection de la vie privée de 2022.

Executive Summary

Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. (Phoenix SPI) was commissioned by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada (OPC) to conduct a telephone survey of Canadians on privacy-related issues.

1. Research Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research was to better understand the extent to which Canadians are aware of and understand their privacy rights and various privacy issues. The objective was to collect and track over time Canadians' opinions of privacy issues that fall under the OPC's four strategic privacy priorities: economics of personal information; government surveillance; reputation and privacy; and the body as information. The research findings will inform and guide the OPC's outreach efforts with Canadians.

2. Key Findings

Many Canadians consider themselves to be knowledgeable about their privacy rights and they continue to be concerned about protecting their personal privacy.

Approximately half of surveyed Canadians rated as good or very good their knowledge of their privacy rights in general (51%) and specifically their knowledge of how to protect their privacy rights (50%). Self-assessed knowledge is down when compared to 2020. This year, more Canadians rated their knowledge as poor or very poor: 27% felt this way about their knowledge in general (versus 18% in 2020), and 30% felt this way about their knowledge of how to protect their personal privacy (versus 23% in 2020). Underscoring this decline in privacy-related knowledge, 48% (down from 52% in 2020) feel they have enough information to know how new technologies might affect their personal privacy. Concern about the protection of their privacy remains high among Canadians, with 93% expressing some level of concern.

More than half the Canadians surveyed are confident that government respects their privacy rights; fewer feel this way about businesses. When it comes to trust in specific types of organizations, Government of Canada, banks, and law enforcement rate the highest among Canadians.

Just over half of the Canadians surveyed (58%; down from 63% in 2020) feel that the federal government respects their privacy rights. Far fewer believe that businesses respect their privacy rights (39% down from 45% in 2020). When the focus is on trust specifically, the vast majority of Canadians (80%) have at least a fair amount of trust that the Government of Canada will protect the personal information they share with them. Following this, three-quarters each said they have a fair amount or a great deal of trust in banks (76%) and law enforcement (76%). Fewer have this level of trust in telecommunications companies and internet service providers (41%), retailers (36%) and Big Tech (34%). Canadians are least likely to trust social media companies. Just one in 10 trust these companies to protect their personal information.

Canadians believe their online activities are being tracked by companies and organizations, are concerned about how their online personal information will be used by organizations and are reluctant to share personal information.

Most Canadians (91%) believe that at least some of what they do online or on their smartphones is being tracked by companies or organizations. In contrast, fewer Canadians (73%) believe at least some of what they do online or on their smartphone is being tracked by the Government. Consistent with their belief that online and smartphone activities are being tracked, 89% of Canadians are at least somewhat concerned about social media platforms gathering personal information posted online to

create a profile of them and almost as many (87%) are at least somewhat concerned about how companies and organizations might use information available about them online to make decisions about them, such as for a job, an insurance claim or health coverage.

In addition, 91% of Canadians are concerned about identify theft, and many are concerned about the Government using personal information about citizens to make decisions about things like government spending (77%) or to investigate cases of fraud or tax evasion (71%). And, when it comes to sharing personal information, a majority of Canadians are not comfortable having their face or photo scanned to verify their age online (65%) or their voice used to confirm their identity (61%).

Highlighting their concerns about privacy protection, Canadians have taken some actions to protect themselves, including reading privacy policies.

Three-quarters of Canadians have adjusted privacy settings on a social media account (75%) or refused to provide an organization or business with their personal information due to privacy concerns (74%). In addition, 70% sometimes or always read privacy policies, notices or pop-ups when using mobile applications or conducting transactions online. Fewer have deleted or stopped using a social media account due to privacy concerns (50%) or stopped doing business with a company or organization that experienced a privacy breach (38%). One-third (32%) said they have raised a privacy concern with a company or organization.

3. Methodology

A 14-minute random digit dialling (RDD) telephone survey was administered to 1,500 Canadian residents, 16 years of age or older between November 23 and December 18, 2022. The results can be considered representative of the population of Canadians aged 16 and older. Based on a sample of this size, the overall results can be considered accurate within $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is greater for results pertaining to subgroups of the total sample. Data were weighted to reflect the population in terms of age, gender, and region.

4. Statement of Political Neutrality

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Phoenix Strategic Perspectives that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the *Communications Policy* of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not contain any reference to electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leader.



Alethea Woods
President
Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc.

5. Contract Value

The contract value was \$69,928.58 (HST included).