

Most Canadians Perceive Risk of Identity Theft

Few believe it will happen to them in coming years

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Montreal, QC – Newly released research conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of ProtectionPower.ca has revealed that while awareness of identity theft is high within Canada (97%), there is little fear that they will be a victim of the crime in both the near-term (1 year, 19%) or the mid-term (5 years, 31%).

When asked where they felt most at risk of being victims of identity theft, neither online nor ‘real world’ locations predominated over the other: online purchasing was perceived as the most dangerous location or activity (80% stating the risk was very or extremely high), followed shortly by gas stations (78%). Social networking sites (74%), restaurants (71%) and retail stores (76%) rounded out the areas most perceived as risks for identity theft. Places in which respondents spent most of their time, such as home, work and school, were generally perceived as ‘safe’ from the risk of ID theft.

Wallets (92%) and personal computers (81%) are seen the most potentially disastrous items for Canadians to have stolen, by a significant margin, unsurprisingly when the theft of easily transportable personal documentation such as Social insurance numbers (95%), passports (95%), birth certificates (93%), credit cards (93%) and bank account numbers (93%) is seen as very or extremely serious.

Most Canadians (72%), however, have taken measures to prevent the theft of these items. Of those that have, the preferred methods are the use of paper shredders to destroy sensitive documents (35%) and the use of computer software suites to protect their personal computers from unauthorized access or tampering (18%).



Knowledge and concern about identity theft in Canada varies depending on the region. Western Canada is the most aware of this crime (99%), whereas Quebec is the least (95%). Ontario residents (65%) share a high level of concern with Western residents (64%), who are also the most concerned with protecting themselves from identity theft (79%).

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between May 17 and May 24, 2010, on behalf of ProtectionPower.ca. For this survey, a national sample of 1,051 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.0 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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