

ONE IN TWO ITALIANS CONSIDERS THE INFORMATION STORED ON HIS/HER DIGITAL DEVICES NOT SECURE

LACK OF DIGITAL SECURITY IS MORE ROOTED IN THE SOUTH AND AMONG THOSE WHO RELY ON THE INTERNET FOR WORK

This is what emerged from the “Focus on digital fears” of the European Observatory on Security Demos&Pi - Unipolis Foundation, presented during the online event “Data Vision & Data Value” organized by the Unipol Group.

The survey also highlighted that:

- 1 in 3 Italians never accesses the web, 23% is always online
- 68% of users believe that online shopping is safe
- 62% of respondents believe that the government and law enforcement agencies monitor part of their activities on the Net, but they accept this in the name of security
- Almost three out of four people believe that part of their digital data is monitored by advertising companies and 59% consider this a privacy risk

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The Italians fear for the security of the **information stored on their digital devices**: one in two interviewees (**48%**) considers it not secure, a negative perception more deeply rooted in the South and among those who rely on the web for work. The picture changes radically when talking about online shopping, which instead is considered safe by **68%** of Italians. It is also interesting to note that, with regard to “social control”, perceptions change greatly depending on the nature of the “controller”: **62% of users** believe that the Government and law enforcement agencies monitor part of their activities on the Net, but **accept this in the name of security**, while **nearly three out of four people** think that a part of their digital data is monitored by advertising companies and, **59%** consider this a **privacy risk**.

This is what emerged from the findings of the “**Focus on digital fears**” of the **European Observatory on Security Demos&Pi - Unipolis Foundation**, presented during the online event “**Data Vision &**

Data Value” organized by the **Unipol Group**. Participants included **Carlo Cimbri**, Unipol Group CEO, **Agostino Santoni**, CISCO CEO, **Michael Wade**, Professor of Innovation and Strategy at IMD Business School, and **Marisa Parmigiani**, Unipol Group Head of Sustainability.

Personal data protection is a deeply felt issue by the Italian people, as well as a fundamental principle in the policies of the Unipol Group which, aware of how the value created through data must be generated by a transparent analysis and must be shared with the subjects to whom such data refer, has recently formalized a new policy. The Unipol Group’s **“Personal Data Protection and Enhancement Policy”**, in particular, will be complementing the issue of data protection with that of their enhancement: the company is committed to using data to build solutions based on people and their needs in order to have a positive impact for the common good. Moreover, the Group has decided to set up a special **“Data Ethics Task Force”** with the task of understanding the impact on stakeholders of the enhancement of personal data underlying projects launched or to be launched, or business activities. A careful measurement of opportunities and impacts follows with a view to adhering to the corporate values contained in the Charter of Values and in the Code of Ethics so as to define choices, on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the Group’s corporate vision and values.

Data protection and online surveillance

In addition to the aforementioned 48% of interviewees who consider the information stored on their devices **“not very”** or **“not at all” safe**, the **“Focus on digital fears”** has also reported a **43% of responders** who consider **the information contained in their computers or phones as “safe”**, while 2% have no clear opinion about this topic.

The perception changes a lot if reference is made to online shopping: **68% of users** stated that they were convinced that using their credit card or home-banking account to **shop online** was safe from nasty surprises.

On the subject of **“social control”**, **62% of respondents** believe that organizations linked to the government and law enforcement agencies monitor at least part of their activities on the web. This is a form of surveillance mostly **tolerated by Internet users in the name of personal and public security** (49% described such controls by the institutions as a guarantee for citizens, while 28% reported risks to privacy).

Actions carried out for personal and commercial interests are considered more **“invasive”**: **nearly three out of four people (74%)** think that at least a part of digital data **“traffic”** is monitored by advertising companies, technology companies or other types of companies. 43% believe that all contents conveyed through their devices on the Net, or at least most of them, are being monitored by such operators. The assessment of such monitoring radically changes: it entails **privacy risks for 59% of the respondents**.

Lack of Digital Security

Digital security is at the centre of the Italians' concerns: 44% of the sample has security concerns in the digital area: the index touches the highest levels among the adult members of the population: **higher than 50% in the age group between 45 and 64 years.** Consistent with the rates of web use, lack of digital security especially concerns people with a **medium-high education level.** From the standpoint of the socio-professional category, the highest levels are observed among self-employed workers and entrepreneurs (55%), self-employed professionals (51%) and technicians, employees, managers and officials (50%), i.e., in **sectors that rely on the Net (also) for work.** Lastly, a higher level is observed in **the southern regions (49%),** compared to other areas of the country.

The two aspects that more frequently concern respondents, in this respect, regard “data security on the Internet” (27% of interviewees) and that “someone may control or get hold of information on purchases or banking transactions on the Internet” (24%).

Use of the Net

Keeping in touch with other people through Social Networks or messaging apps, this is the main reason (**64% of respondents**) why the Italians use the Net. The other big function of the Net (**69% of the sample group**), which played a key role during the pandemic, refers to the **area of information.**

Over the last few years, the proportion of citizens “on the Net” has grown significantly. Despite this, to date, **one-third of the Italian adult population never accesses the web:** in particular, the highest portions of disconnected people are observed among women (32%), people with a low education level (76%), pensioners (52%) and housewives (55%). 73% of the interviewees access the Internet, even occasionally, and, among these, **23% are always online,** a figure that reaches top levels among self-employed professionals (54%) and students (49%).

Unipol Gruppo S.p.A.

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Unipol Gruppo

Media Relations
Fernando Vacarini
T. +39 051 5077705
pressoffice@unipol.it

Investor Relations
Adriano Donati
T. +39 051 5077933
investor.relations@unipol.it

Barabino & Partners

| | |
|---|---|
| Massimiliano Parboni T. +39 335 8304078 m.parboni@barabino.it | Giovanni Vantaggi T. +39 328 8317379 g.vantaggi@barabino.it |
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