



Privacy

Australians seek help to protect their personal information online

Australian adults are aware of the potential risks of providing personal information online and feel the need to protect themselves, according to an ACMA research report released in October.

The report, *Attitudes Towards Use of Personal Information Online*, was commissioned principally to help inform the ACMA's development of education materials designed to help people protect their personal information online. The report focused on adult users of the internet.

'Most users identified identity theft as the most severe risk associated with disclosing personal information online,' said Chris Cheah, Acting Chair of the ACMA. 'Other risks of concern include unwanted communications such as spam, financial loss, fraud, damage to reputation and invasion of privacy.'

Many of the users involved in the research revealed they did not know specifically what to do to protect themselves online. The users also said they found technological change difficult to keep up with and often did not know who to ask for assistance or advice.

'The ACMA was pleasantly surprised by the report's findings that people wanted to take responsibility for protecting themselves,' Mr Cheah said.

'What we now need to do is find ways of giving people the information they need to do this. The ACMA will be using the report to develop further materials to help users, and ISPs and others involved in educating the public.'

To locate this information go to www.acma.gov.au and follow this path: For the public: Consumer & community advice > Spam & e-Security > Protecting yourself online.

Report findings will inform the ACMA's ongoing development and marketing of education materials to assist Australian adults protect their personal information on the internet.

The ACMA website features a range of resources dedicated to online risk management, including information on how to:

- > protect your computer
- > prevent people from illegally using your computer or internet address without your permission
- > protect your children online
- > protect your server from malicious software such as viruses or spyware
- > report spam.

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The report of the qualitative study is available on the ACMA's website at www.acma.gov.au (go to For the public: Consumer & community advice > Digital media literacy > The ACMA digital media literacy resources).