

# Control Risks



## Information security awareness report

Research by

Consumer  
Analysis Limited

## INTRODUCTION

As companies continue to embrace the internet, the number of new security threats increases. 87% of large businesses in the UK reported a security incident in 2006 and despite a reduction in the number of companies suffering breaches, the actual number of reported incidents continues to rise.

However Information security is not just about IT security; it is a crucial element of strategic control and therefore a management issue. Many organisations are a long way from having a security-aware culture and consequently new threats and greater use of emerging technologies represent a growing risk to business.

Perception is that information security is all about protecting your organisation from external hackers. While this is clearly a risk, information security should also address the additional risks posed by internal parties (employees, contractors, cleaners etc) stealing or (inadvertently) passing on confidential company information through speech, paper, disposal or other means.

We commissioned this report to find out about people's attitude to both personal data protection and security of information in the workplace. In it we see that people have a fairly lax attitude to keeping personal information safe, whilst being fairly mistrustful of organizations that have access to our personal information.

### **Expertise**

Control Risks' expertise and knowledge of international standards enables us to identify potential security threats and work with clients to safeguard against them, while adhering to the legal restrictions surrounding their business.

By undertaking a comprehensive audit and risk assessment of both physical and wider risks, we can recommend a strategy that helps to protect your company's reputation, legal, regulatory, health and safety obligations and business performance. We can also advise on how to target your investment in security controls at the areas of maximum business benefit. We can assist clients in every aspect of the information security cycle; from helping to produce security policies that integrate security into normal business practice, to planning effective contingency procedures that enable clients to respond to any security incident efficiently, whilst minimising disruption to business.

### **Raising awareness**

Control Risks can assist in the promotion of internal security standards and help raise awareness of effective information security management techniques, through staff education and by providing feedback for management on the culture within their organisation.

\*Information security breaches survey 2006

# Control Risks

## **Confidentiality and discretion**

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of Control Risks' ethos. We always maintain a strict code of conduct surrounding all the tasks we undertake. We are independent and our investigations are always objective and unbiased. We always work with the utmost discretion and with minimum disruption to every day business.

Our comprehensive range of services includes:

- Security audits
- Physical penetration testing
- IT penetration testing
- IT security
- Policy and procedure review
- Information security consultancy
- Leak investigations
- Technical surveillance countermeasures
- Business continuity services
- Security engineering
- Pre-employment screening
- Due diligence
- ISO27001 accreditation

## **Our experience**

In addition to the services listed above, we have carried out information security policy reviews, specific IT Security reviews, email security reviews, gap analyses against ISO27001 and treasury system reviews for multi national companies all over the globe.

For further information, please

contact our experts on:

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or visit: [www.control-risks.com/forensics](http://www.control-risks.com/forensics)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report shows that people in Britain have a contrary attitude towards personal data. We are both careless about keeping personal information safe and mistrustful of organisations that have access to our personal information.

We are most mistrustful about travel agents – 63% do not think they will guard personal information such as date of birth safely. Nearly as many (58%) do not trust that a gym will guard such information carefully. With potentially grave implications, one in 5 are unsure that a bank will take care of their personal information such as their bank account number, password or credit card number! Even more worryingly, those working in the banking sector were less confident about the bank's security systems than the rest of us.

Similarly, nearly one in five of the population are unsure that their employer (17%) or doctor (15%) protect personal details such as date of birth or phone number safely. Those working in the medical profession were less confident in their doctor's approach to security than the rest of us, with 18% feeling unsure that they would protect personal details adequately.

Despite this seemingly cautious approach, this report shows that people in Britain are often incredibly careless about keeping their most private, personal and vulnerable information safe. A majority of the people we interviewed said they had witnessed someone talking on the phone or a public place in a way that everyone could hear their personal information such as their date of birth, address, phone number, bank account or even password (60%).

This report highlights, particularly, that people are often careless about keeping information safe in the workplace. More than a third of people in the workplace have not had information security training (36%), 31% have not been given any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach and 17% have not been given any guidelines on how employees should act to keep their information safe when it goes outside the organisation.

Yet more than one in 7 people are aware of an incident where their company has lost important data. More than half (55%) are free to record company information onto a memory stick or CD and 40% of the people we spoke to have leaked or written down the password for their company computer.

## KEY FINDINGS

Key facts are highlighted in the report which follows.

20% of people are not sure that a bank will look after their personal data carefully.

**58% of people are not sure that a gym will look after their personal data carefully.**

15% of people are not sure that a doctor will look after their personal data carefully.

**17% of people are not sure that an employer will look after their personal data carefully.**

63% of people are not sure that a travel agent will look after their data carefully. (p24)

**60% of people have been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information (such as date of birth, address, phone number, bank account, password etc).**

38% have left a laptop or desktop computer at work logged on and accessible and 48% have seen others do this.

**25% have left sensitive information lying on someone's desk.**

55% of people can record company information freely onto a memory stick or CD in their workplace.

**17% said their firm does not provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep information safe when it goes outside the organisation. (p39)**

36% have not been given any information security training.

**24% have written down or told somebody their password.**

16% have been aware of an incident where their company lost important data.

**31% of companies do not provide any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach or how it should be reported.**

## THE FINDINGS

We interviewed 1000 employees aged 18-plus, working in offices in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The fieldwork was carried out in February and March 2008

**How sure are you that a bank will look after your personal data carefully (eg age, bank details, NI number)?**

Very sure	30%
Fairly sure	50%
Not very sure	14%
Not at all sure	6%

**How sure are you that a gym will look after your personal data carefully (eg age, bank details, NI number)?**

Very sure	7%
Fairly sure	35%
Not very sure	39%
Not at all sure	19%

**How sure are you that a doctor will look after your personal data carefully (eg age, bank details, NI number)?**

Very sure	45%
Fairly sure	40%
Not very sure	11%
Not at all sure	4%

**How sure are you that an employer will look after your personal data carefully (eg age, bank details, NI number)?**

Very sure	41%
Fairly sure	42%
Not very sure	11%
Not at all sure	6%

**How sure are you that a travel agent will look after your personal data carefully (eg age, bank details, NI number)?**

Very sure	7%
Fairly sure	30%
Not very sure	39%
Not at all sure	24%

# Control Risks

**Have you ever been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information...such as their or someone else's date of birth, address, phone number, bank account number, password, credit card number, etc...if so, where?**

On a train	20%
On a bus	15%
In the street	21%
At work	34%
In the pub	16%
Other	13%
No	40%

**In your place of work, have you ever done or witnessed any of the following....?**

Left sensitive information lying on someone's desk	25%
Seen others do this	42%
Left a desktop or laptop unattended but logged on and accessible	38%
Seen others do this	48%
Held the door for a stranger who was not accompanied by another member of staff	28%
Seen others do this	33%
None of the above	29%

## Comments:

Andy, 42, journalist, South East: "I've only left contact numbers on the desk that nobody else would be interested in. I've held a door open for a stranger in the office but they had to get past reception and CCTV first."

**Dollar, 58, school office clerk, South West: "In a school it's very secure, if someone comes in a member of staff always bring them."**

Awal, 30, manager, South East: "I have left sensitive information on my desk but the desk is pretty private and I trust those around like family."

**Natalie, 22, administrative assistant, South East: "It is quite an open office and people have to shift themselves to different computers to do things."**

# Control Risks

**If you use a computer at work, have you written down (somewhere at work) or told anyone your password?**

Never	60%
Once	10%
More than once	14%
Don't use a computer at work	16%

**In your workplace, are you able to do any of the following (ie you or your colleagues)...?**

Record information onto a memory stick or CD	55%
Email information freely	61%
Photocopy documents	69%
Don't know/ don't use a computer at work	18%

**Does your firm provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep sensitive information safe when it goes outside the organisation (eg on a laptop, memory stick, CD or hard copy)?**

Yes	66%
No	17%
Don't deal with any type of company information	17%

**If you deal with company information, has your firm given you specific training in information security?**

Yes – had very specific and rigorous training	32%
Yes – had some training but not very rigorous	32%
No specific training	36%

# Control Risks

**If you deal with company information, have you ever been aware of an instance where your firm has lost important data or information?**

Yes	16%
No	84%

**Comments:**

Nicole, 26, lawyer, North West: "Most of our work is sensitive information so we have been trained accordingly."

**If you deal with company information, does your firm provide clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach and how it should be reported?**

Clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach	45%
Clear guidance on how it should be reported	52%
Neither of those	31%

**What type of physical security does your firm use at its offices?**

Photo passes	36%
Passes	10%
Swipe card – main door	31%
Swipe card – department door	20%
Entrance code for main door	33%
Entrance code for department door	22%
Manned security desk	36%
CCTV	54%
Each employee has own key	20%
Other	17%

## THE INTERVIEWEES

There were 1000 employees aged 18-plus, working in offices, from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland involved in our survey.

In lengthy telephone interviews they were asked whether they had ever witnessed or themselves been careless about their personal data in public or at work, and how well they think their data is looked after by the institutions that hold it.

The fieldwork was carried out during February and March 2008.

Regional figures match the density of population. Figures may not add up to 100 due to rounding up.

### Gender

<b>Male</b>	436	44%
<b>Female</b>	564	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Age

<b>Under 30s</b>	176	18%
<b>30s</b>	193	20%
<b>40s</b>	255	26%
<b>50s</b>	271	27%
<b>60+</b>	86	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>981*</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*19 people did not give their age*

### Job sector

<b>Banking, finance, insurance, legal</b>	121	12%
<b>Public works, construction, engineering</b>	85	9%
<b>Telecoms, IT, technology</b>	52	5%
<b>Oil, gas, mining, power</b>	7	1%
<b>Medical, healthcare, pharmaceuticals</b>	169	17%
<b>Sales, retail, manufacturing</b>	112	11%
<b>Catering, hospitality, travel, events, service</b>	49	5%
<b>Art, design, media, PR, publishing</b>	40	4%
<b>Civil service, public administration</b>	152	15%
<b>Other</b>	208	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>995*</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*5 people did not specify their sector*

# Control Risks

## Size of company

<b>Under 50</b>	332	33%
<b>50-250</b>	266	27%
<b>Over 250</b>	397	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Global status

<b>National</b>	805	81%
<b>International</b>	191	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Seniority

<b>Senior management</b>	111	11%
<b>Middle management</b>	327	33%
<b>Junior/ staff</b>	554	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>100%</b>

## FINDINGS BY SECTOR

Figures in bold represent the national average

### BANKING

24% of people are not sure that a bank will look after their personal data carefully. **20%**

56% of people are not sure that a gym will look after their personal data carefully. **58%**

12% of people are not sure that a doctor will look after their personal data carefully. **15%**

11% of people are not sure that an employer will look after their personal data carefully. **17%**

60% of people are not sure that a travel agent will look after their data carefully. **63%**

60% of people have been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information (such as date of birth, address, phone number, bank account, password etc). **60%**

44% have left a laptop or desktop computer at work logged on and accessible and 62% have seen others do this. **38%, 48%**

30% have left sensitive information lying on someone's desk. **25%**

21% have written down or told somebody their password. **24%**

65% of people can record company information freely onto a memory stick or CD in their workplace. **50%**

17% of those who deal with company information said their firm does not provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep information safe when it goes outside the organisation and 29% were not given any information security training. **17%, 36%**

# Control Risks

17% have been aware of an incident where their company lost important data. **16%**

28% of companies do not provide any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach or how it should be reported. **31%**

## PUBLIC WORKS

25% of people are not sure that a bank will look after their personal data carefully. **20%**

55% of people are not sure that a gym will look after their personal data carefully. **58%**

17% of people are not sure that a doctor will look after their personal data carefully. **15%**

14% of people are not sure that an employer will look after their personal data carefully. **17%**

65% of people are not sure that a travel agent will look after their data carefully. **63%**

60% of people have been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information (such as date of birth, address, phone number, bank account, password etc). **60%**

42% have left a laptop or desktop computer at work logged on and accessible and 54% have seen others do this. **38%, 48%**

25% have left sensitive information lying on someone's desk. **25%**

21% have written down or told somebody their password. **24%**

55% of people can record company information freely onto a memory stick or CD in their workplace **50%**

# Control Risks

27% of those who deal with company said their firm does not provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep information safe when it goes outside the organisation and 44% were not given any information security training.

**17%, 36%**

20% have been aware of an incident where their company lost important data.

**16%**

31% of companies do not provide any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach or how it should be reported.

**31%**

## TELECOMS

18% of people are not sure that a bank will look after their personal data carefully.

**20%**

53% of people are not sure that a gym will look after their personal data carefully.

**58%**

18% of people are not sure that a doctor will look after their personal data carefully.

**15%**

22% of people are not sure that an employer will look after their personal data carefully.

**17%**

64% of people are not sure that a travel agent will look after their data carefully.

**63%**

71% of people have been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information (such as date of birth, address, phone number, bank account, password etc).

**60%**

33% have left a laptop or desktop computer at work logged on and accessible and 48% have seen others do this.

**38%, 48%**

21% have left sensitive information lying on someone's desk.

**25%**

25% have written down or told somebody their password.

**24%**

# Control Risks

75% of people can record company information freely onto a memory stick or CD in their workplace **50%**

15% of those who deal with company said their firm does not provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep information safe when it goes outside the organisation and 27% were not given any information security training. **17%, 36%**

8% have been aware of an incident where their company lost important data. **16%**

25% of companies do not provide any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach or how it should be reported. **31%**

## OIL

43% of people are not sure that a bank will look after their personal data carefully. **20%**

57% of people are not sure that a gym will look after their personal data carefully. **58%**

14% of people are not sure that a doctor will look after their personal data carefully. **15%**

29% of people are not sure that an employer will look after their personal data carefully. **17%**

58% of people are not sure that a travel agent will look after their data carefully. **63%**

29% of people have been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information (such as date of birth, address, phone number, bank account, password etc). **60%**

57% have left a laptop or desktop computer at work logged on and accessible and 43% have seen others do this. **38%, 48%**

# Control Risks

43% have left sensitive information lying on someone's desk.	25%
57% have written down or told somebody their password.	24%
43% of people can record company information freely onto a memory stick or CD in their workplace	50%
43% of those who deal with company said their firm does not provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep information safe when it goes outside the organisation and 50% were not given any information security training.	17%, 36%
33% have been aware of an incident where their company lost important data.	16%
50% of companies do not provide any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach or how it should be reported.	31%

## MEDICAL

19% of people are not sure that a bank will look after their personal data carefully.	20%
63% of people are not sure that a gym will look after their personal data carefully.	58%
18% of people are not sure that a doctor will look after their personal data carefully.	15%
22% of people are not sure that an employer will look after their personal data carefully.	17%
66% of people are not sure that a travel agent will look after their data carefully.	63%
60% of people have been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information (such as date of birth, address, phone number, bank account, password etc).	60%

# Control Risks

29% have left a laptop or desktop computer at work logged on and accessible and 41% have seen others do this.	<b>38%, 48%</b>
26% have left sensitive information lying on someone's desk.	<b>25%</b>
18% have written down or told somebody their password.	<b>24%</b>
49% of people can record company information freely onto a memory stick or CD in their workplace	<b>50%</b>
6% of those who deal with company said their firm does not provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep information safe when it goes outside the organisation and 22% were not given any information security training.	<b>17%, 36%</b>
15% have been aware of an incident where their company lost important data.	<b>16%</b>
17% of companies do not provide any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach or how it should be reported.	<b>31%</b>

## SALES

20% of people are not sure that a bank will look after their personal data carefully.	<b>20%</b>
54% of people are not sure that a gym will look after their personal data carefully.	<b>58%</b>
13% of people are not sure that a doctor will look after their personal data carefully.	<b>15%</b>
14% of people are not sure that an employer will look after their personal data carefully.	<b>17%</b>
58% of people are not sure that a travel agent will look after their data carefully.	<b>63%</b>

# Control Risks

73% of people have been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information (such as date of birth, address, phone number, bank account, password etc).

**60%**

37% have left a laptop or desktop computer at work logged on and accessible and 45% have seen others do this.

**38%, 48%**

18% have left sensitive information lying on someone's desk.

**25%**

20% have written down or told somebody their password.

**24%**

33% of people can record company information freely onto a memory stick or CD in their workplace

**50%**

17% of those who deal with company said their firm does not provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep information safe when it goes outside the organisation and 52% were not given any information security training.

**17%, 36%**

11% have been aware of an incident where their company lost important data.

**16%**

42% of companies do not provide any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach or how it should be reported.

**31%**

## CATERING

12% of people are not sure that a bank will look after their personal data carefully.

**20%**

54% of people are not sure that a gym will look after their personal data carefully.

**58%**

14% of people are not sure that a doctor will look after their personal data carefully.

**15%**

# Control Risks

18% of people are not sure that an employer will look after their personal data carefully.	17%
61% of people are not sure that a travel agent will look after their data carefully.	63%
55% of people have been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information (such as date of birth, address, phone number, bank account, password etc).	60%
33% have left a laptop or desktop computer at work logged on and accessible and 29% have seen others do this.	38%, 48%
14% have left sensitive information lying on someone's desk.	25%
26% have written down or told somebody their password.	24%
20% of people can record company information freely onto a memory stick or CD in their workplace	50%
29% of those who deal with company said their firm does not provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep information safe when it goes outside the organisation and 38% were not given any information security training.	17%, 36%
7% have been aware of an incident where their company lost important data.	16%
48% of companies do not provide any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach or how it should be reported.	31%

## ART

21% of people are not sure that a bank will look after their personal data carefully.	20%
61% of people are not sure that a gym will look after their personal data carefully.	

# Control Risks

	<b>58%</b>
28% of people are not sure that a doctor will look after their personal data carefully.	<b>15%</b>
23% of people are not sure that an employer will look after their personal data carefully.	<b>17%</b>
71% of people are not sure that a travel agent will look after their data carefully.	<b>63%</b>
80% of people have been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information (such as date of birth, address, phone number, bank account, password etc).	<b>60%</b>
68% have left a laptop or desktop computer at work logged on and accessible and 63% have seen others do this.	<b>38%, 48%</b>
48% have left sensitive information lying on someone's desk.	<b>25%</b>
61% have written down or told somebody their password.	<b>24%</b>
63% of people can record company information freely onto a memory stick or CD in their workplace	<b>50%</b>
38% of those who deal with company said their firm does not provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep information safe when it goes outside the organisation and 53% were not given any information security training.	<b>17%, 36%</b>
10% have been aware of an incident where their company lost important data.	<b>16%</b>
60% of companies do not provide any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach or how it should be reported.	<b>31%</b>

## CIVIL SERVICE

23% of people are not sure that a bank will look after their personal data carefully.	20%
57% of people are not sure that a gym will look after their personal data carefully.	58%
18% of people are not sure that a doctor will look after their personal data carefully.	15%
20% of people are not sure that an employer will look after their personal data carefully.	17%
63% of people are not sure that a travel agent will look after their data carefully.	63%
61% of people have been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information (such as date of birth, address, phone number, bank account, password etc).	60%
44% have left a laptop or desktop computer at work logged on and accessible and 50% have seen others do this.	38%, 48%
26% have left sensitive information lying on someone's desk.	25%
25% have written down or told somebody their password.	24%
56% of people can record company information freely onto a memory stick or CD in their workplace	50%
12% of those who deal with company said their firm does not provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep information safe when it goes outside the organisation and 31% were not given any information security training.	17%, 36%
24% have been aware of an incident where their company lost important data.	16%

# Control Risks

27% of companies do not provide any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach or how it should be reported. **31%**

## OTHER

19% of people are not sure that a bank will look after their personal data carefully. **20%**

61% of people are not sure that a gym will look after their personal data carefully. **58%**

14% of people are not sure that a doctor will look after their personal data carefully. **15%**

17% of people are not sure that an employer will look after their personal data carefully. **17%**

63% of people are not sure that a travel agent will look after their data carefully. **63%**

48% of people have been aware of someone talking on the telephone or in a public place in such a way that everyone can hear their personal information (such as date of birth, address, phone number, bank account, password etc). **60%**

33% have left a laptop or desktop computer at work logged on and accessible and 46% have seen others do this. **38%, 48%**

24% have left sensitive information lying on someone's desk. **25%**

26% have written down or told somebody their password. **24%**

67% of people can record company information freely onto a memory stick or CD in their workplace **50%**

17% of those who deal with company said their firm does not provide guidelines on how employees should act in order to keep information safe when it goes outside the organisation and 45% were not given any information security training. **17%, 36%**

# Control Risks

12% have been aware of an incident where their company lost important data.

**16%**

37% of companies do not provide any clear guidance on what constitutes a security breach or how it should be reported.

**31%**

# Control Risks

## APPENDIX

### AT-A-GLANCE SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Highest  Lowest

	Nat	Banking	Public Works	Telecoms	Oil	Medical	Sales	Catering	Art	Civil Service	Other
% unsure a bank will look after their personal data carefully	20%	24%	25%	18%	43%	19%	20%	12%	21%	23%	19%
% unsure a gym will look after their personal data carefully	58%	56%	55%	53%	57%	63%	54%	54%	61%	57%	61%
% unsure a doctor will look after their personal data carefully	15%	12%	17%	18%	14%	18%	13%	14%	28%	18%	14%
% unsure an employer will look after their personal data carefully	17%	11%	14%	22%	29%	22%	14%	18%	23%	20%	17%
% unsure a travel agent will look after their data carefully	63%	60%	65%	64%	58%	66%	58%	61%	71%	63%	63%
% who have been aware of someone revealing personal data in public	60%	60%	60%	71%	29%	60%	73%	55%	80%	61%	48%
% who have left sensitive information on their desk	25%	30%	25%	21%	43%	26%	18%	14%	48%	26%	24%
% who have left a computer logged in at work	38%	44%	42%	33%	57%	29%	37%	33%	68%	44%	33%
% who have told someone or written down their computer password	24%	21%	21%	25%	57%	18%	20%	26%	61%	25%	26%