

Security And Privacy Concerns Remain For Smartphone And Tablet Users

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Brands must reassure consumers that privacy protections meet expectations

Cost may be the top consideration when internet users around the world decide which PCs, tablets and smartphones to buy, but security and privacy issues are not far behind, according to data from Edelman.

Edelman's February 2012 research found that just under half of internet users consider data security and privacy issues when they choose a smartphone—about the same as for a personal computer—and slightly fewer took this into consideration when purchasing a tablet. For both PCs and mobile devices, price and ease of use were more important factors than privacy when buying, and tablet purchasers took into consideration product warranties more often than security.

Despite the fact that security is not consumers' primary concern when purchasing a smartphone, companies that want to foster consumers' mcommerce habits need to factor in privacy as they develop mobile retail platforms. Smartphone security is important because the devices tend to go with their owners everywhere. Security is not as paramount on tablets, however, as these devices are often used at home, where the presence of a desktop or laptop computer may be the hub for secure activities like banking, reserving tablets for more basic web-browsing activities.

As marketers encourage smartphone users to pull out their phone as a payment device—or conduct other commercial transactions on what amounts to, for many people, a trackable black box—users remain uncomfortable. In January 2012, for example, Prosper Mobile Insights found that, despite a majority of US smartphone and tablet users considering it convenient and useful to simply swipe a device to pay for a purchase, even more were concerned about the security and location-tracking issues inherent in such transactions.

Last fall, comScore found that security concerns were smartphone users' top reason for not making purchases via their mobile devices.

eMarketer estimates that 37.5 million Americans ages 14 and older will make a purchase via mobile at least once this year, boosting total mcommerce sales to \$11.6 billion, up 73% over 2011. Nearly all mobile buyers (97%) will be smartphone users—making their comfort with security and privacy on their phones key to the continued growth of mobile shopping and buying.

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