

Really Secure, or Not Really?

By Erik Bratt

In a survey conducted earlier this summer, a majority of ISSA members indicated they feel confident their organizations are protected against data breaches.

But how confident should they be?

According to the very same study, more than two-thirds said they are not confident or only somewhat confident that they know where all of the electronically stored sensitive employee and customer data resides in their organization.

This dichotomy – *feeling secure yet not knowing where all the data resides* – was the most interesting trend to emerge from the June survey, which was jointly conducted with Microsoft, an ISSA partner. Nearly 600 people responded to the 13-question online study, which included the raffle of several Xbox 360s and Zunes.

So what is the explanation? The answers are likely numerous, including the fact it is often difficult to assess the breadth of what sensitive private data actually is, or how many forms it can take (email, spreadsheets, etc.). It is also hard to assess how broadly the data can be shared with partners and other vendors. (Do you have any thoughts on this matter? We'd love to hear them.)

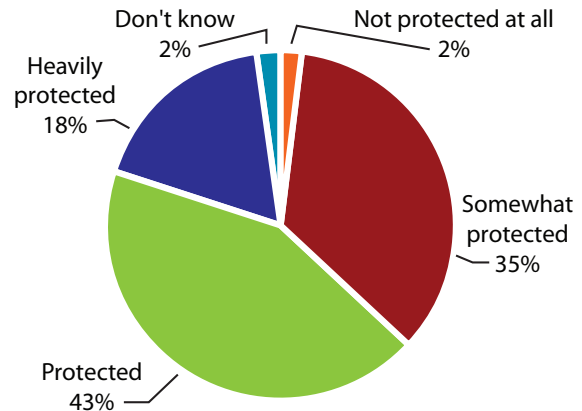
Other interesting data points from the study include:

- **Management gets it** – More than 60% of IT pros said their executives were very aware of the seriousness of data breaches within their organization.
- **Knock on wood** – Some 32% of respondents said they had experienced no data breaches at all, while 23.8% said they had experienced between 1-10 breaches.
- **Top causes** – When IT pros had experienced a breach of some sort, their top three reasons were violations of user policy, user errors and lost or stolen laptops.
- **Helpful technology** – When it comes to solutions that would help guard against data breaches, “role-based access controls” and better encryption capabilities were the top responses.
- **Shared responsibility** – Who is responsible for data privacy policies: security or privacy representatives? According to nearly 40 percent of respondents, it is both.

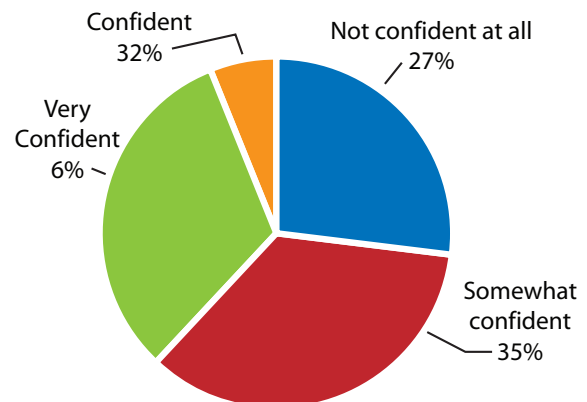
Thank you to everyone who participated in the study. We look forward to sharing the results of future surveys.

About the survey sample: Nearly 600 ISSA members, three-quarters of them from North America. More than 50% la-

How Well is Your Organization Protected Against Data Breaches?



How Confident are You that You Know Where All of Your Sensitive Customer/Employee Data Lies?



beled themselves as IT security professionals across a broad array of industries. Nearly 60 percent were from companies with less than 10,000 employees.

About the Author

Erik Bratt is a Sr. Marketing Manager for Microsoft's Trustworthy Computing Group. A former business reporter, Mr. Bratt has been involved in technology and services for nearly 10 years and is currently responsible for marketing Microsoft's Anywhere Access Vision for securing corporate information shared and accessed across networks and the web. He can be reached at erikbr@microsoft.com.