Who Has the Best ‘Cyber Hygiene’?

An estimated 1.6 million data breaches occurred throughout the United States in 2017, jeopardizing the security of more than 178 million records. All states have data breach laws requiring entities that collect personal information to notify individuals if that information has been breached. Yet, the risk of cyberattacks varies significantly by state, as cybercriminals take advantage of residents’ risky online behavior.

A new report identifies the states whose residents are the most and the least prepared to prevent and respond to cyberattacks. The Ponemon Institute, a Michigan-based research group, and the internet security company Webroot asked consumers in each state about their experience with cyberattacks and certain risky online behaviors, like reusing passwords, clicking phishing links, using unsecured Wi-Fi networks, failing to update operating systems and applications, and failing to use antivirus software. The researchers then created a “cyber hygiene index,” which they used to rate state residents’ cyber preparedness.

The states lowest on the index—and thus whose residents are most vulnerable to cyberattacks—were Florida, Wyoming, Montana, New Mexico and Illinois. Rating highest were New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Utah, Rhode Island and Minnesota.

— Laura Fodor

### Password Habits of Internet Users

- % who vary passwords for different accounts: 39%
  - Use same or very similar: 57%
  - Use very different: 41%
- % who share passwords among friends and family: 46%
  - Have shared: 59%
  - Have not shared: 41%
- % who use two-factor authentication: 52%
  - Do not use: 46%

Source: Pew Research Center

### Cyber Hygiene Index

A higher index value indicates a higher degree of preparedness to prevent and respond to cyberattacks.

Source: Ponemon Institute

### Under Attack!

Percentage of U.S. adults who have experienced data theft

- Fraudulent credit card charges: 41%
- Personal information compromised: 35%
- Email taken without permission: 16%
- Social Security number compromised: 15%
- Credit line taken out in their name: 14%
- Social media account compromised: 13%
- Tax refund taken out in their name: 6%

Source: Pew Research Center

### A Recent Spike in Breaches

Annual number of data breaches and exposed records in the U.S., 2005 to 2017 (in millions)

Source: Statista