Global Tech Support Scam Research
New Zealand, September 2018
New Zealanders reported the highest level of tech support scams among the sixteen countries surveyed with over three-in-four consumers experiencing at least one scam. Pop-up ads/windows and redirect scams were the most common and significantly higher than the global averages. These scams caused consumers to lose money, time and suffer greater life stress.

Scammers successfully fooled 21% of consumers into continuing with an interaction which was inline with the global average. Among the group that continued, 6% reported losing money while 13% did not lose money.

New Zealanders had high levels of skepticism and distrust about potential scams. 90% of consumers believed it highly unlikely that a reputable company would initiate unsolicited contact and 83% would distrust that type of communication. Only 37% of consumers would trust companies not to sell them unnecessary support or repair services. Nearly eight-in-ten of consumers who experienced scams lost trust in software and technology companies ability to protect them from tech support scams.

Gen Z, Millennials and Males had the highest exposure to tech support scams. They were more likely to lose money, engaged in riskier online behavior such as visiting torrent sites, have a greater familiarity with technology companies than older generations and were potentially hurt by overconfidence in their device and Web expertise.
Anatomy of tech support scams
Scam exposure had costs beyond the initial loss of money

38% of those continuing incurred a direct economic cost

- 78% Exposed to Scam
- 22% No Interaction
- 21% Continued
- 57% Ignored scam
- 6% Lost money to scam
- 2% Spent money on checking & repairing
- 4% Invested time checking & repairing
- 9% Nothing happened

Those who avoided direct scam losses spend time and money on repairs or to ensure their devices were not compromised

Q2. For each of the interactions you experienced, please indicate which actions you took
Q8. As a result of this interaction, have you lost any money?
Q12. To date, how much money, if any, has it cost you to fix or investigate further as to whether your computer had been compromised after this interaction?
Q12A. To date, how much time has it taken to fix or investigate further as to whether your computer had been compromised after this interaction?
Rates of tech support scam loss became more consistent worldwide

- The worldwide decline in scam loss was driven by declines in countries that had the highest rates of loss in 2016, lead by India, U.S., China and Brazil.

- Conversely, countries which had the lowest scam incidence in 2016 (UK, Germany, Denmark) have regressed toward the worldwide average.

- New Zealand is right at the worldwide average with 6% losing money to scammers.

Q1a. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following in the last year or so (2017 and later). Q2. For each of the items you experienced, please indicate whether you continued with the interaction and took the recommended actions, initially continued but then did not take further action, or ignored the interaction. Q8. As a result of this interaction, have you lost any money?
Nearly eight-in-ten consumers experienced a tech support scam

Incidence of tech support scams was the highest in New Zealand

- **New Zealand**: 22% Scam interaction, 78% No scam interaction
- **Global**: 38% Scam interaction, 62% No scam interaction

Pop-up ads/windows and redirect scams were the most common

- **New Zealand**: 22% Unsolicited call, 53% Redirect to website, 42% Unsolicited email, 62% Pop-up ad or window
- **Global**: 27% Unsolicited call, 36% Redirect to website, 37% Unsolicited email, 44% Pop-up ad or window

Q1a. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following in the last year or so (2017 and later).
Q2. For each of the interactions you experienced, please indicate which actions you took.
More than half of consumers were able to ignore the potential tech support scam

New Zealand’s score was similar to the global average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continued with interaction</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>Global</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

57% were able to ignore the potential tech support scam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>Global</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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Costs spread beyond monetary loss (Base: those who continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>Global</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>67%</td>
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</table>

Q1a. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following in the last year or so (2017 and later).
Q2. For each of the interactions you experienced, please indicate which actions you took.
Q12a. To date, how much time has it taken to fix or investigate further as to whether your computer had been compromised after this interaction?
Q13. Thinking back on each interaction, how much stress did you suffer? If you had multiple interactions, think how you felt about the most stressful one. The most stressful interaction caused me...
The selling of support services would be trusted by more than half of consumers who experienced a tech support scam. They had less trust in companies’ ability to protect them from future tech support scams.

90% were unlikely to trust an unsolicited interaction

- New Zealand: 10% (Very/Somewhat unlikely), 90% (Very/Somewhat likely)
- Global: 17% (Very/Somewhat unlikely), 83% (Very/Somewhat likely)

83% were distrustful of receiving unsolicited contact

- New Zealand: 83% (Very/Somewhat unlikely), 17% (Very/Somewhat likely)
- Global: 83% (Very/Somewhat unlikely), 17% (Very/Somewhat likely)

Q14. If you were to receive an unsolicited call or email like this from someone claiming to be from a reputable company offering you help, how likely would you be to trust them?
Q15. How likely do you think it is that a reputable company would contact customers without first receiving some form of interaction from the customer?
Consumers who experienced a tech support scam lost trust in software & technology companies

**Only 37% would trust companies not to sell them unwanted support services**
(Base: experienced any scam)

- Trust a lot/a little: 37% (New Zealand), 41% (Global)
- Distrust a little: 29% (New Zealand), 28% (Global)
- Distrust a lot/no trust at all: 34% (New Zealand), 31% (Global)

**77% lost trust in companies ability to protect consumers from scams**
(Base: experienced any scam)

- Did not lose trust: 23% (New Zealand), 28% (Global)
- Lost all/a lot/a little trust: 77% (New Zealand), 72% (Global)

Q13b. How much do you trust software and technology companies not to sell you unnecessary support or repair services to fix new problems that are discovered on your computer?
Q13c. Thinking back on each interaction, how much trust have you lost in reputable companies like Apple, Facebook, Google and Microsoft to protect you from the types of interactions you experienced?
Males, Millennials & Gen Z had the highest exposure to tech support scams, though Boomers showed the highest levels of unsolicited calls.

### Tech support scam incidence by age & gender

**(Base: Total)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen Z: 18-23</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials: 24-37</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X: 38-53</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomers: 54+</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Millennials were most likely to lose money

**(Base: those who continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Lost Money</th>
<th>didn't Lose Money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen Z</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomers</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Males were likely to lose money

**(Base: those who continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Lost Money</th>
<th>didn't Lose Money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q1a. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following in the last year or so (2017 and later).

Q2. For each of the interactions you experienced, please indicate which actions you took.

Q8. As a result of this interaction, have you lost any money?
Gen Z & Millennials demonstrated riskier behavior and possible overconfidence

Gen Z & Millennials engaged in riskier behavior
% Almost always/often)

- Use torrent sites
- Download movies, tv shows, music, videos
- Share email in exchange for content
- Change passwords regularly
- Buy products online
- Download latest updates
- Access bank/credit card site
- Use social media

Millennials & Gen Z rated themselves the highest on computer/Web expertise

- Gen Z
- Millennials
- Gen X
- Boomers

Q21A: Please check how often you do the following activities when you are online
Q21b. Which best describes your experience with computers and how to use the Internet?
Gen Z & Millennials were the most trusting of companies not to sell them unwanted support services.

How much were companies trusted not to sell unwanted support services:

- **Gen Z**:
  - Distrust a lot/no trust at all: 25%
  - Distrust a little: 28%
  - Trust a lot/a little: 47%

- **Millennials**:
  - Distrust a lot/no trust at all: 26%
  - Distrust a little: 32%
  - Trust a lot/a little: 42%

- **Gen X**:
  - Distrust a lot/no trust at all: 36%
  - Distrust a little: 31%
  - Trust a lot/a little: 33%

- **Boomers**:
  - Distrust a lot/no trust at all: 32%
  - Distrust a little: 26%
  - Trust a lot/a little: 32%

Q13B. How much do you trust software and technology companies not to sell you unnecessary support or repair services to fix new problems that are discovered on your computer?
Consumer protection agencies had the greatest responsibility for protecting consumers.

Responsibility of organizations to protect consumers
(Base: Total)

- Consumer protection agencies: 69% Great deal/Fair amount, 19% Greatest
- Law enforcement in the country from which the scam originates: 77% Great deal/Fair amount, 16% Greatest
- Government regulators in your country: 69% Great deal/Fair amount, 16% Greatest
- Reputable company the scammers claim to represent: 59% Great deal/Fair amount, 16% Greatest
- Government regulators in the country from which the scam originates: 75% Great deal/Fair amount, 15% Greatest
- Law enforcement in your country: 67% Great deal/Fair amount, 11% Greatest

Q17. For each of the following organizations, please indicate how much responsibility they should have for protecting consumers from this type of scam or intrusion?

Q18. In your opinion, which one has the greatest responsibility to protect consumers?