Study Reveals 50 Percent Loss in Productivity When Visual Privacy Is At Risk

3M announces full study findings at RSA Conference

A new study conducted by the Ponemon Institute, commissioned by 3M, the maker of privacy filters for computers and mobile devices, reveals that employees are 50 percent less productive when they feel their visual privacy on their computer or mobile device screen is at risk. Based on this finding, lost productivity due to employee visual privacy concerns is potentially costing a U.S. business organization with more than 7,500 people more than $1 million dollars per year. [1] The _3M Visual Privacy Productivity Study_ also found that visual privacy concerns impact an employee's willingness to fully disclose sensitive information on a computer screen, which is especially relevant in industries where customer information is collected on a computer or tablet screen in a public place.

Larry Ponemon, Chairman and Founder of the Ponemon Institute, will discuss the findings of the _3M Visual Privacy Productivity Study_ and its implications at the 2013 RSA Conference during a special presentation at the RSA Briefing Center on Tuesday, February 26 at 11:15 a.m. PST. Attendees are also invited to visit the 3M booth (number 532) throughout the duration of the show to learn more about the study and experience the full portfolio of 3M privacy and protection products.

"While many companies realize that snooping and visual privacy presents a potential data security issue, there has been little research regarding how the lack of visual privacy impacts a business' bottom line," says Mr. Ponemon. "As workers become more mobile and continue to work in settings where there is the potential for visual privacy concerns, companies need to find solutions to address productivity as it relates to computer visual privacy in addition to dealing with the fundamental security issues of mobile devices."

The study was conducted among 274 individuals from five organizations in a variety of business sectors. Individuals were invited to participate in a survey that included answering sensitive questions about their employer. Prior to taking the survey on a computer in close proximity to a stranger hovering nearby, there was a brief waiting period where all individuals were given the choice to work or not work. The study examined whether people chose to work or not work when their visual privacy was invaded. It also examined whether employees chose to answer negatively about their employer or not respond to sensitive questions in the survey. The results outline how productivity and transparency behaviors differed among those who were provided visual privacy with a 3M privacy filter and those who did not have visual privacy.

For more information or to download the study whitepaper, go to www.3Mscreens.com/ProductivityStudy. The following key findings outline some of the highlights from the whitepaper.

Some other key findings include:

Employees are 50 percent less productive when their visual privacy is at risk. Employees with visual privacy chose to work 44% of the time compared to 22% of the time for those without a 3M privacy filter. Based on these findings, this lost productivity costs an organization approximately $543 per employee per year[2].
Visual privacy impacts transparency. When asked to answer a series of sensitive question on a computer, those who value privacy passed on nearly twice as many questions when they didn't have visual privacy on a computer compared to those who did have a 3M privacy filter protecting their answers from the view of the researcher.
Women value privacy more and are more productive. Fifty-six percent of those surveyed cited privacy as either important or very important, yet women valued privacy more (61%) than men (50%). Similarly, women's productivity was more positively impacted than men when their screen was protected with a privacy filter.
Older employees value privacy more. While 61 percent of employees older than 35 valued privacy, only 51

percent of those under 35 placed importance on privacy.
More than half of those surveyed said their visual privacy had been invaded:

69 percent in the workplace
55 percent while traveling via plane, train, bus
51 percent in a public place such as a café, airport or hotel.

Employees unsure on how organization handles sensitive information.

47 percent were unsure or did not think their organization placed an importance on protecting sensitive information that is displayed on computer screens and did not have adequate policies in place when employees are working in a public location.
58 percent were unsure or did not think other employees were careful about protecting sensitive information on computer or mobile device screens when in public places.

[1] Analysis is based on assumptions and empirical findings from various Ponemon Institute surveys and studies. Assumes 26% of employees travel with a computer or comparable device.

[2] Analysis is based on assumptions and empirical findings from various Ponemon Institute surveys and studies. Assumes value of labor of typical business user in U.S. is $56 per hour.

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About 3M

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