

Data privacy in the US

Exploring consumer attitudes and new horizons

Introduction

As global momentum continues to build behind new privacy laws, and consumers become increasingly more vocal over the commoditization of their digital selves, the shifting power dynamics of the digital economy are reshaping the way organizations are having to operate in the era of big data.

Laying claim to the world's largest economy and ranking as the third most populous country on earth, all eyes are on the US as the growing privacy movement seeks to trump surveillance capitalism and activists continue to push for federal law and order. While there isn't one comprehensive national law governing data privacy in the US, the landscape is made up of a complex patchwork of sector-specific laws – including [HIPAA](#), [GLBA](#), [FCRA](#) – and, more recently, the wave of [state-specific laws](#), three of which are fully operative, the CCPA in California, the CDPA in Virginia and the CPA in Colorado.

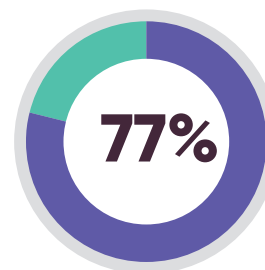
The significant movement towards safeguarding data privacy and increasing data protection is further fueled by the realization that, in order for data-driven economies to thrive, consumer trust in how data is handled is crucial; therefore, the protection of privacy is now as much of an economic necessity for the US as it is a fundamental right for the consumers fueling its market value.

The American Consumer State of Mind 2021

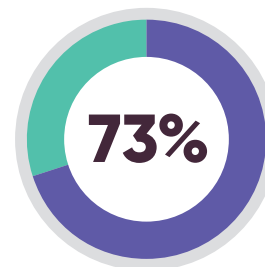
With more social and economic activities taking place online than ever before, and digital transformation being propelled forward by the pandemic, the importance of data privacy and protection has become increasingly recognized by authorities and consumers alike in the US.

The US economy is evolving at pace: organizations have more personal data at their disposal than ever before, and technological innovation has become dependent on the ingestion of data that feeds intelligent AI algorithms to open the doors to commercial growth and new opportunities. However, with heightened awareness of how data is shaping the online world, including enhancing hyper-personalized experiences and delivering at-your-fingertips convenience, our [Global Consumer State of Mind Report 2021](#) indicates that US consumers are now pushing for the boundaries of privacy to be firmly put in place.

Driven by the pandemic, this privacy awakening is highlighting the collective weight that consumers hold in carving out a digital economy that lies within the defined boundaries of responsible and ethical data use.



of consumers in the US now want more transparency over the way brands collect and use their data



believe that independent regulation of data protection is even more important than ever

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About Truata

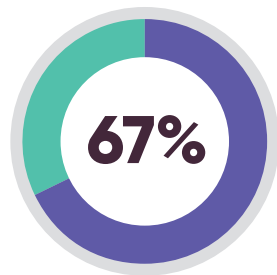
Truata specializes in privacy-enhancing technologies for privacy risk assessment, de-identification and the true anonymization of data. The company enables businesses to unlock powerful insights with its suite of proprietary solutions, while complying with the highest global data protection standards to build trust and transparency with their customers.

For more information visit www.truata.com.

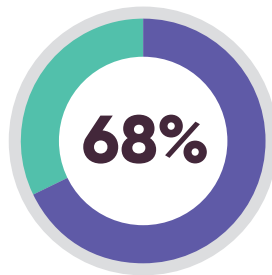
Commercialization, surveillance and shifting sentiments

Big data mining has sat at the heart of the US privacy versus surveillance and commercialization debate in recent years, with activists asserting that both corporate interests and national security have taken precedence over the protection of individual privacy rights. However, with the rapid emergence of privacy tech and a newfound understanding that privacy protection does not need to hurt bottom-lines, be burdensome to businesses or limit innovation, the tables are beginning to turn.

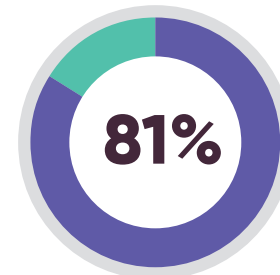
As smart devices continue to saturate life and personal data provides the entry point to the freedoms presented in a digitally driven world, it's little surprise that 67% of US consumers say that not only has their use of technology increased during the pandemic but so has their digital footprint. This has led to 1-in-2 Americans (50%) feeling a loss of control over just how much data has been stored about them online, and 68% wanting to reduce the amount of personal information that organizations are storing about them.



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of US consumers having already taken one or more steps to reduce their digital footprint

Despite the patchwork of complex privacy laws that feed into the US landscape, 60% of US consumers feel worried that businesses have overstepped the mark with data usage during the pandemic, and 62% feel that most companies don't really believe in the importance of data protection but view it as a tick-box exercise to satisfy regulations – a number that has risen from 56% in 2020.

With a staggering 81% of US consumers having already taken one or more steps to reduce their digital footprint, there are clear indications of a strong societal sentiment to reclaim ownership of digital identities through a collective backtrack and retrace of online movements.

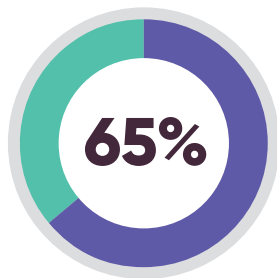
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Trust, transparency and tech

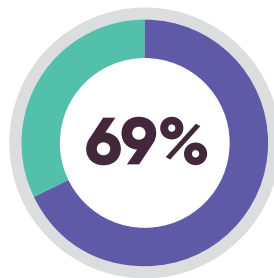
Rising from 63% in 2020 and topping the global average (66%) for 2021, over two-thirds of US consumers (67%) say that they have no idea how much of their personal data is being collected and what it is used for. With digital trust at a tipping point, the need for transparency will be key to providing the assurances that consumers are now seeking when aligning themselves with brands.

The heightened sense of skepticism around data use for commercial gain is lending itself to a new wave of consumer activism that demands clear accountability from data-driven organizations that are profiting from these lucrative data lakes that are swelling with privacy risks. More than the enforcement of aggressive regulations, two-thirds of US consumers (66%) now believe the onus should be on companies to look after personal data responsibly rather than on consumers to read legal policies.

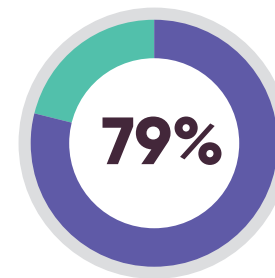
Signaling future intentions and implications for organizations that fail to proceed with consumer foresight, 69% of US consumers say that they would stop buying from brands that don't demonstrate care by acting responsibly with personal data, a statistic that tops the global average (64%) and is second only to its Latin American neighbors in Brazil (72%). Perhaps most noteworthy for purchase intention and building brand loyalty in a new world is the 65% of US consumers who now consider data privacy a key differentiator, and the 79% who state that data privacy is now essential to them as they step towards post-pandemic life.



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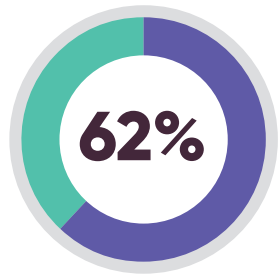
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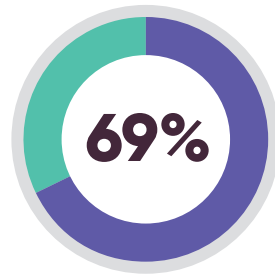
Invasion or innovation?

With advancements in technology heightening expectations around consumer experience, organizations have been ramping up efforts to develop hyper-personalization strategies with the knowledge that digitally-savvy consumers are, statistically, ready to pay more for personalized experiences and products. However, while leveraging omni-channel data from the multiple devices of modern-day consumers is key to shaping experiences right across the buyer journey, a privacy paradox is at play. Despite relishing the rewards of data-driven innovation, the erosion or intrusion of privacy is no longer the price that consumers are willing to pay.

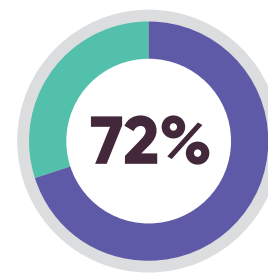
Trumping averages around the world, 59% of US consumers say they are concerned about the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) being used to predict their behavior and personal preferences, which is driving a determination to take back control of the digital self. Rising from 68% in 2020, 72% of US consumers now agree that the tracking of their online behavior is invasive, and 6-in-10 (60%) would prefer not to receive personalized offers from brands if this means that brands cannot track them or profile their shopping behaviors.



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agree that the tracking of their online behavior is invasive

Taking proactive steps to protect their own privacy, 62% of US consumers say that they will stop using brands if they 'stalk' them online with too many personalized offers and 69% would stop engaging with a brand that requests personal data that they are unwilling to share.

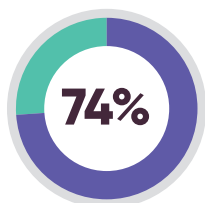
With advanced technology at their fingertips and prolific amounts of data being gathered, consumers are sending a clear signal to brands: the ability to lose or leverage loyalty lies in the ability to understand the weight that privacy now holds in the eye of the consumer.

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The privacy pay-off

If data-driven strategies are to be successful in a consumer-led economy, privacy must sit at the core of commercial conversations. In the race to get ahead in the data decade, future-thinking organizations are already understanding the ROI of privacy and pivoting to meet the increasing demands presented by consumers and regulatory authorities alike.

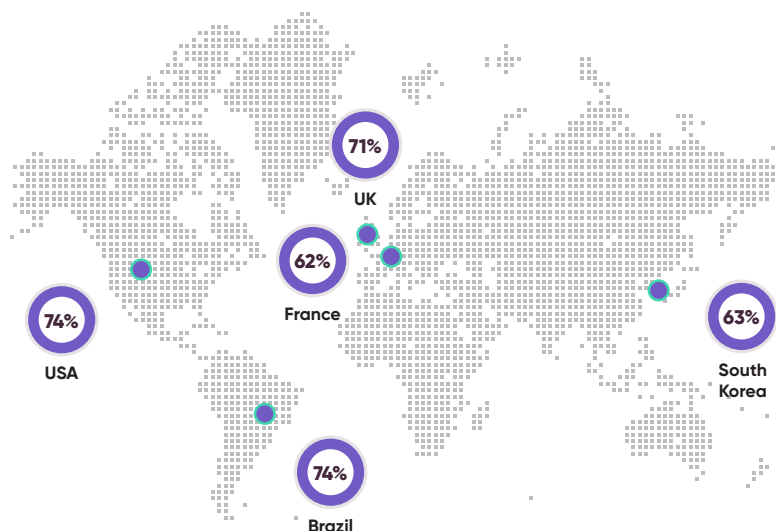
Jumping from 68% in 2020 and topping the global average for 2021 (69%), 74% of US consumers say they are more likely to be loyal to a brand if they trust them to use their personal data responsibly. The benefit for brands, however, stretches beyond loyalty. Almost two-thirds of US consumers (65%) say they would spend more money with a brand if they trust them to use their personal data appropriately, and 7-in-10 day they will shop with brands that make it very easy for them to control how their data is used.



74% of US consumers say they are more likely to be loyal to a brand if they trust them to use their personal data responsibly

The value that brands now place on privacy, therefore, is indicative of the value consumers will place on brands. To meet the demands of US and global consumers alike, organizations no longer need to be at loggerheads with legislation. The correlation between consumer attitudes and commercial investments in privacy-enhancing technologies (PETs) is playing out in such a way that highlights that the harmonious co-existence of personal privacy and data-driven innovation is indeed possible – and profitable – in today's world.

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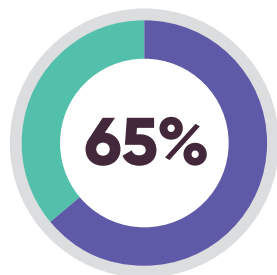
The future is private

With over three-quarters of US consumers (78%) in agreement that they should own their digital selves and two-thirds (66%) believing that data privacy will be even more important to them in two years' time than it is today, the future belongs to those who are already embracing a privacy-first mindset to drive growth and innovation.

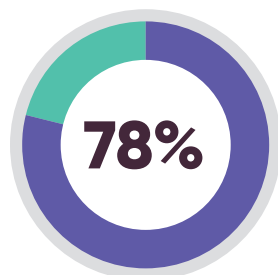
Keeping abreast with the increasingly complex global privacy landscape and remaining compliant is merely one cog in the big data value chain. When it comes to harnessing and harvesting data, the opportunities sit with those organizations who tackle the new-age challenges head on, taking accountability and providing transparency over their data practices to demonstrate a long-term commitment to consumer privacy.

In the era of big data and big privacy, understanding the power of privacy-preserving analytics, therefore, will become a key commercial differentiator that enables data driven organizations to gain a competitive edge while putting consumer concerns front and center.

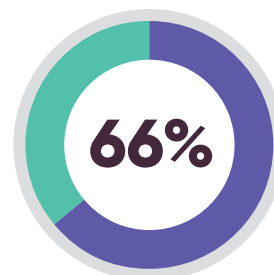
Ultimately, building a data ecosystem on the pillars of privacy, trust and transparency will be the key to unlocking value and leveraging long-term consumer loyalty.



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Tap into the full [Global Consumer State of Mind Report 2021](#) for more insights from leading economies around the world.

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Methodology

Arlington Research, an independent market research agency, conducted 2,000 consumer interviews in the US. A nationally representative sample was achieved; this was based on gender, age, region and employment status. Age ranges referred to in the report are defined as follows: Generation Z (those born between 1994–2001), Millennials (those born between 1980–1993), Generation X (those born between 1965–1979), Baby Boomers (those born between 1946–1964) and the Silent Generation (those born before 1946).

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