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Survey claims explosion in mobile use creates major security worries.

A recent survey of 768 IT professionals in a cross section of companies in the UK, North America, Germany and Japan has concluded that the surge in use of personal mobile devices on corporate networks is creating a whole new security headache for employers.

The report prepared by network security vendor, Check Point Software Technologies, found that 71% of respondent companies blame mobile devices for contributing to â€œincreased security incidentsâ€ with many of these security problems being traced back directly to employee carelessness and/or ignorance.

What is particularly worrying is that 47% say customer data is stored on mobile devices and, as a result, a large majority (72%) say careless employees pose a greater security threat than hackers. The risk stems from the devices holding everything from network credentials (38 %) to business contacts (65%) and corporate email (80%).

Roughly half of all those surveyed cited the following scenarios as sources of vulnerability :

1. Lack of employee awareness of risks associated with their devices 62%

2. Insecure Web browsing 61%

3. Insecure Wi-Fi connectivity 59%

4. Lost or stolen mobile devices containing corporate data 58%

5. Corrupt applications downloaded to mobile devices 57%

6. Lack of security patches from service providers 53%

7. High rate of users changing or upgrading their mobile devices 48%

As far as individual devices are concerned, 43% of respondents considered that Android presents the greatest security risk while only 36% identified Apple iOS and 22% for Blackberry OS.

The actual scale of the problem seems to be containable with a third of respondents reporting no increase in incidents at all over the last 2 years. Another third said that the number was up by under 25 %. Clearly, the remaining third with increases of over 25% urgently need to get a grip on the situation.

Thereâ€™s no doubt that these increased threats present fresh challenges to network managers who are already having to deal with other topical security issues such as those posed by the growing number of shared network services in the public sector.

These new challenges are a headache for managers and it may be worth investing in expertise from network experts.

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