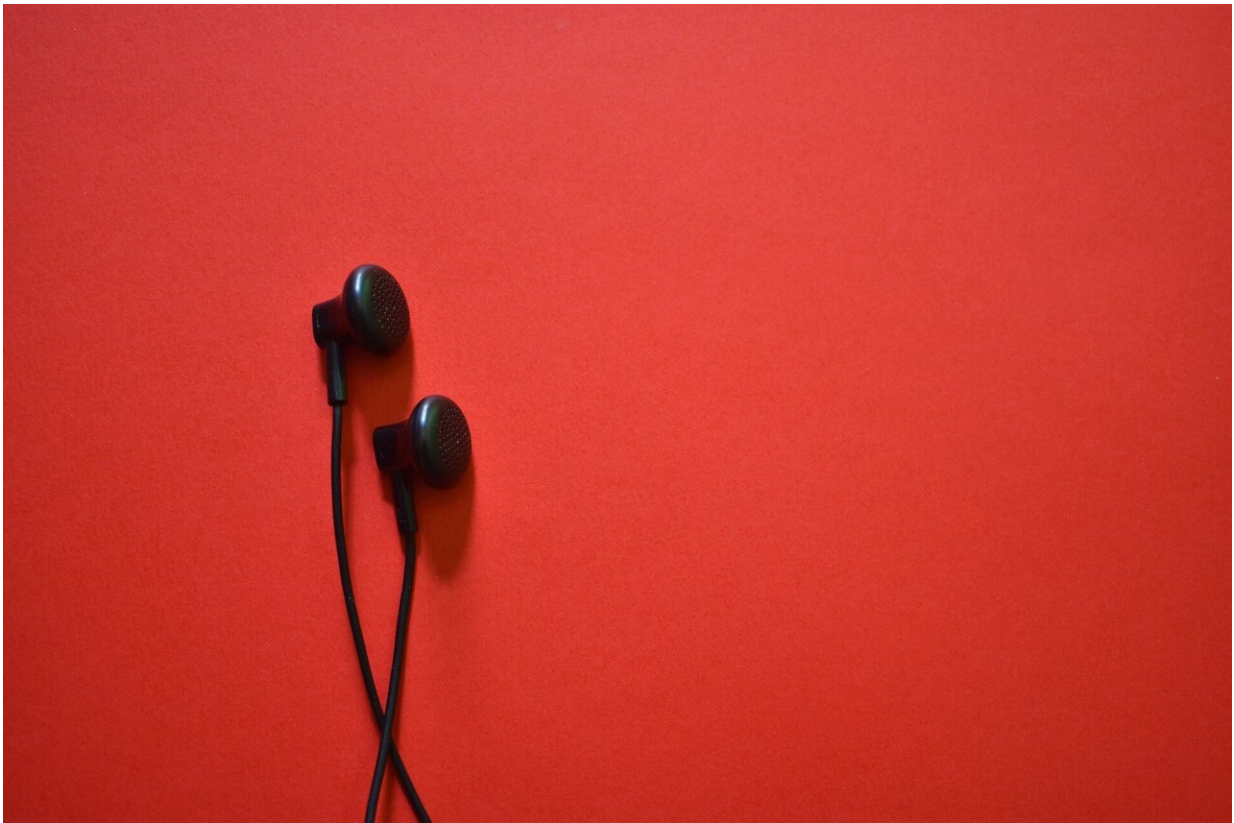


# Americans are really creeped out by devices tracking and eavesdropping on them

January 29 2020, by Jessica Guynn

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

You've heard it a million times: Americans don't care about our online privacy. Turns out that's not really true.

Anxiety levels over [privacy](#) and security are peaking as the relentless collection of online data and the steady drumbeat of data incursions and breaches take a toll.

People are worried like never before about eavesdropping by [smart home devices](#) such as Google Home and the Amazon Echo or having their microphone tapped to target them with personalized ads and increasingly they want a say over how their [personal information](#) gets used, according to a survey released Tuesday to observe Data Privacy Day.

More than 8 in 10 American adults expect to have control over how a business handles their data, the survey released by privacy firm DataGrail found.

More than two-thirds expect to be able to opt out of a company selling their data to a third party, the survey of 2,000 American adults conducted this month by DataGrail and research firm OnePoll shows.

And frustration levels with the status quo are rising. More than half of the survey participants said they were fed up, frustrated or creeped out that their data is used to serve them hyper-targeted ads.

What's striking a real nerve with Americans? More than 82% of the survey participants said they are alarmed by businesses monitoring or collecting data from their mobile phone's microphone, their laptop's webcam and smart home devices. They also don't feel comfortable with their phone or laptop being used to track their location.

For 48% of American adults, the No. 1 privacy concern is [social media companies](#) selling their data to third parties, according to the survey. Four in 10 object to their personal information from social media being sold to third parties to serve ads.

More than a third don't like the content of their emails being used and 28% don't like the content of their chats being used to serve ads. Twenty-one percent of American adults worry about their health data being sold, the survey found.

In fact, Americans are taking their privacy so seriously these days that 3 in 4 said they'd pay more for [online services](#) that offer better privacy protection, such as services that don't show ads, sell their data to third parties or use their data for marketing or sales purposes. And 4 in 5 Americans think there should be a law to protect their personal data.

So will 2020 be the year that [online privacy](#) gets more than lip service from Capitol Hill and statehouses across the country?

State lawmakers seem to be listening. Over the past year, new privacy laws popped up in California, Nevada and Maine. Washington, New York and several other states are exploring legislation. But federal efforts to create a national framework have stalled.

The strongest privacy protections were enacted this month in California. The California Consumer Privacy Act, or CCPA, grants consumers the right to see the personal information that companies collect about them and stop them from selling it.

If companies extend these new rights to consumers outside the state, or if other states follow California's lead, the CCPA could effectively become a national law. Yet less than a quarter of Americans are familiar with the California Consumer Privacy Act, or CCPA, the DataGrail survey found.

If all Americans were granted the rights in the CCPA:—65% of survey participants said they would like to know and access what information businesses are collecting about them;—62% would like the right to opt

out and tell a business not to share or sell their personal information;—49% would like the right to delete the data held by the business.

Daniel Barber, CEO of DataGrail, says his company's research shows that 50% of people would exercise at least one right under the CCPA.

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