

Businesses at risk for cyberattack but take few precautions

March 2 2020, by Joyce M. Rosenberg



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Although businesses are increasingly at risk for cyberattacks on their mobile devices, many aren't taking steps to protect smartphones and tablets.

That's one of the conclusions of a report on mobile security released last week by Verizon, which found that nearly 40% of companies had their

mobile security compromised, up from 33% in 2019. But many companies don't prioritize mobile security—43% said they had sacrificed security while owners and managers focused on other concerns.

Forty-three percent of the companies surveyed said [mobile security](#) was sacrificed to meet deadlines or productivity targets. These companies were twice as likely to be compromised as those that didn't take precautions.

A big threat to cybersecurity comes from free public WiFi services. A fifth of the organizations that reported their mobile devices had been attacked said an unapproved or insecure WiFi service was used.

These WiFi services, available in places like [coffee shops](#) and public transportation hubs, are favorite targets of hackers who can intercept communications and data including account numbers and passwords. Cybersecurity experts warn against accessing any [sensitive information](#) while using public WiFi, and they also warn against enabling mobile devices to automatically connect to these services.

The Verizon report found that many companies are at risk for cyberattack because 72% of employees have used public WiFi. About half of those surveyed said they prohibit employees from using public WiFi.

The survey questioned 876 people responsible for the purchase, management and security of mobile devices at companies of all sizes. While the results were not broken out according to [company](#) size, they do indicate the risks that small businesses face. Many owners run their companies from their [mobile devices](#).

One precaution cybersecurity experts recommend is multi-factor

verification, which requires a password and a code in order to use a [device](#) or to access an account. But such security steps require extra time and effort. Among those surveyed, 62% said [security](#) was sacrificed in the interest of speed and 52% said convenience was the reason.

Companies are taking risks even though the damage from a cyberattack—for example, down time, money stolen from accounts, even lost customers—can be severe. Two-thirds of the companies that reported they had suffered an attack said the incident had a major impact on the business.

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