

Top 5 Reasons Visual Privacy Matters

Large-scale digital breaches make the headlines, but that's not the only way to hack a company's information. Low-tech threats, like visual hacking, can easily capture sensitive, confidential and private information for unauthorized use.

In 2014, worldwide security software revenue was over \$21 billion.¹ Organizations know there are threats against digital privacy. That's why you have passwords, firewalls and secure IDs. But 'low tech' security areas, like visual privacy, can be easily overlooked. Even with all the digital precautions, a quick glance could compromise your organization.

Here are the top 5 reasons why you should care about visual privacy.

1) Data breaches can cost you big.

Lost data means lost money. In Canada, it can mean a lot of money. A Ponemon Institute study found that the cost of an average Canadian data breach is \$5.32 million. That's almost \$2 million more than the global average.²

According to the study, the largest cost component of Canadian data breaches was lost business.³ Increased turnover, customer acquisition activities, as well as reputation losses can take a toll on your company's time and pocketbook.

2) It only takes minutes, and often goes unnoticed.

Visual hacking is easier than you think. The 3M Visual Hacking Experiment found that a white hat hacker (a non-malicious person hired to help expose security vulnerabilities) could easily glean information through visual hacking. In 88% of trials, the hacker successfully obtained sensitive information. Almost half of those incidents took less than 15 minutes. Plus, in 70% of attempts, no one stopped the hack from occurring – even when the hacker was in full view, or used a cell phone to take pictures of on-screen data.⁴

Open floor plans can make visual hacking even easier for vendors, third parties or malicious workers. During the experiment, more information was visually hacked in offices with open layouts than those with traditional layouts.⁵ With the increased trend toward open floor plans, it's critical that companies consider visual privacy protocols.

A Ponemon Institute study found that the cost of an average Canadian data breach is



\$5.32 million

In 88% of trials,

the hacker successfully obtained sensitive information.



Privacy is
the best policy.



3) Your employees are data gatekeepers.

In a survey conducted by the Ponemon Institute, IT professionals were asked about data protection for their organizations, and the human factors involved. 56% of IT professionals said their workforce spends no time on data protection.⁶ Plus, the study shows that employees regularly engage in numerous risky practices. These include sharing passwords, leaving computers unattended when outside the workplace, and working in a public space without a privacy filter for their screens.⁷

Often, employees are simply not aware the information they work with is desirable, or how visible it can be – especially in open-office layouts. Visible on-screen information could provide an entry point to the enterprise gateway. Even company directories or general correspondences could lead to large-scale data breaches, through phishing attacks, economic espionage, social engineering and even cyber extortion.

4) Your data is on the move.

Our screens are viewable by everyone around us. In their survey with IT professionals, the Ponemon Institute shows that the proliferation of mobile data-bearing devices is raising the threat posed by your insiders. Over half of IT professionals said employees carry sensitive data on mobile devices either frequently or very frequently.⁸

With one in four Canadian workers regularly working outside the office,⁹ visual hacking is a real issue for employers. Whether it's working from home, checking email on one's commute, or working in a coffee shop, mobile workers can easily expose confidential data and risk potential breaches.

5) Simple solutions make a difference.

Visual hacking is a real risk. It's a quick and easy tactic to glean sensitive data, while avoiding the bulk of security measures. But even the simplest tools can keep visual hackers in the dark. Privacy filters are one solution that help protect sensitive information as it is displayed on-screen. In the 3M Visual Hacking Experiment, those companies that employed the use of privacy filters, like those made by 3M, reduced the amount of information hacked.¹⁰

In addition to using privacy filters, companies should educate and train employees to properly handle the data they are responsible for maintaining. Issuing a clean desk policy, having a document shredding process and setting up procedures that allow employees to report suspicious behavior are other ways to round out your visual privacy protection.

In an optimized visual privacy model, managers and employees know the risks of visual hacking, and use preventative controls, like privacy filters, to enable freedom and productivity. Protecting sensitive information means that employees can get their work done at any time, anywhere.

56%

of IT professionals said their workforce spends no time on data protection.⁶



Over half

of IT professionals said employees carry sensitive data on mobile devices either frequently or very frequently.⁸



The 3M Privacy Solution

As the trusted visual privacy experts, 3M continues to develop standard and custom solutions that help protect enterprise devices against visual hackers. Using innovative microlouvre technology, 3M™ Privacy Filters are designed for laptops, monitors and mobile devices to block side views, while providing a crisp, clear view for the intended viewer.

[Learn more at 3M.ca/visualhacking](http://3M.ca/visualhacking)

Privacy is
the best policy.



¹Gartner, "Market Share Analysis: Security Software, Worldwide, 2014," 2015.

²Ponemon Institute, "2015 Cost of Data Breach Study: Canada," 2015, sponsored by IBM.

³Ibid

⁴Ponemon Institute, "3M Visual Hacking Experiment," 2015, sponsored by 3M and the Visual Privacy Advisory Council.

⁵Ibid

⁶Ponemon Institute, "The Human Factor in Data Protection," 2012, sponsored by Trend Micro.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Statistics Canada, "The Canadian Labour Market at a Glance," 2007.

¹⁰Ponemon Institute, "3M Visual Hacking Experiment," 2015, sponsored by 3M and the Visual Privacy Advisory Council.

**Privacy is
the best policy.**

