



The California Privacy Initiative

A Project of Consumer Action and the Consumer Federation of America

Executive Summary: Survey Shows Too Many Californians Are Still Unaware of Privacy Rights

The California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) that took effect in January 2020 gives residents important rights concerning their personal information. Consumer Action and Consumer Federation of America, with support from the Rose Foundation, have launched The California Privacy Initiative to educate Californians about the law and encourage them to exercise their rights. As part of the project, we queried residents about their awareness of and experience with some key provisions of the CCPA.

People are increasingly being tracked, online and offline, as they go about their daily lives. The information collected about them over time and from different sources is combined and analyzed to create profiles of their preferences, behavior, attitudes, abilities and other characteristics. These profiles can determine what offers they receive—not only for products and services, but for employment, credit, housing, and other economic opportunities—and the prices or rates they pay. There are also concerns about law enforcement access to people's data and the risk of identity theft as vast amounts of personal information are compiled. Exercising the rights to see, delete, and stop their data from being sold helps Californians protect themselves from unwanted, unfair, and harmful uses of their personal information.

Measuring awareness of CCPA rights

Our online survey was conducted by Engine Insights from Oct. 7 to Oct. 12, 2021. We asked Californians if they had seen the notice of their privacy rights on businesses' websites they visited in the past year and whether they had asked to see the personal information collected about them, asked to delete their information, or requested that it not be sold. The survey also asked whether businesses should be required to obtain people's consent before collecting, using, selling, or sharing their personal information for

purposes other than to provide the goods or services they requested.

Who participated in the survey?

1,507 California residents 18 years of age or older participated in the survey. They had a choice of doing so in English or Spanish; 98 percent chose English, and 2 percent, Spanish. Respondents were:

- 67 percent White
- 9 percent Black
- 4 percent Native American or Alaska Native
- 10 percent Asian
- 14 percent Other

When asked "Do you consider yourself to be of Hispanic/Spanish/Latino descent," 35 percent said yes, 65 percent said no. Whites in the survey findings exclude those who identified as Hispanic.

What are the main survey findings?

Most Californians have seen the notice about their CCPA rights on businesses' websites.

More than two-thirds (69 percent) of those surveyed said they saw the notice of their rights required by the CCPA some of the time or more frequently on websites they visited in the last year. But only 14 percent said they always saw the notice, and an equal number said they never saw it.

Younger, richer and more educated Californians were more likely to see the notice of their CCPA rights. More young people said they saw the notice on businesses' websites than older people, and more people with incomes over \$100,000 or who graduated from college said they saw the notice than those with incomes of less than \$50,000 or with only a high school degree or less education.

The prominent "Do Not Sell My Personal Information" option works. Far more Californians said they had asked a business whose website they visited not to sell their personal information at least once (63 percent) than had asked to delete their data (47 percent) or to see the information that had been collected about them (46 percent).

The top reason why Californians did not make CCPA requests was because they did not know they could. More than half (51 percent) said they did not ask for their personal information to be deleted because they did not know they could. Slightly fewer (48 percent) said that was the reason they didn't ask to see the information that had been collected about them or ask a business not to sell their information (42 percent).

Younger, Black and Hispanic Californians more frequently said they did not know they could make these requests than older and White people. More survey respondents at the lower end of the income and educational scales also gave that reason for not making these requests.

More White people said they did not make these requests because they did not think it was necessary than Blacks and Hispanics. Richer, older and higher-educated Californians were also more likely to say they did not make these requests because they did not think it was necessary.

Some found making these requests too complicated. For instance, 12 percent of survey respondents age 18-34 said they did not ask to see the pieces of information collected about them because it was too complicated, compared to 5 percent of those age 65 and older. This was also more of a problem for Blacks and Hispanics than for Whites.

The other reasons why Californians are not making these requests should be explored.

More than 10 percent of the survey respondents chose "none of these" when presented with a list of reasons why they did not make these requests (11 percent of those who did not ask to see their data, 16 percent of those who did not ask a business not to sell their data, and 13 percent of those who did not ask to delete their data).

Californians who made CCPA requests were not entirely satisfied with businesses' responses. Of those who asked to see or delete their data, 73 percent were very or somewhat satisfied with the responses; 71 percent of those who asked for their data not be sold were very or somewhat satisfied with the responses. More than a quarter were not too satisfied or not satisfied at all.

Californians overwhelmingly favor data minimization. Nine out of 10 survey respondents said that businesses should be required to get their permission if they want to collect, use or share their personal information for any purpose other than to provide the product or service they requested.

What are the takeaways for California policymakers?

Too many Californians are still unaware of important rights under the CCPA. The ability to see and delete their personal information should be as prominent and easy to act on as their right to ask businesses not to sell their data. The new California Privacy Protection Agency should explore the reasons why some people have not exercised these rights, and why those who have were not entirely satisfied with businesses' responses. More educational outreach is needed, especially to young people and minority communities. Californians clearly want more limits on the information businesses can collect about them and its use beyond what is necessary to fulfill their requests. The "notice and opt-out" model places too much of a burden on individuals to understand businesses' data practices and take action.

[Click here](#) for the full survey report.