

2023 Annual Population Survey Report – 2023 Results

KANTAR PUBLIC

Contents

Background and methodology

Key findings

- Sample profile
- Use of technology
- Keeping protected online
- Awareness of rights and options
- Experience of unwanted digital communications
- Accessing support services
- Perpetrators
- Reporting harmful content

3

8

11

13

17

27

31

43

48

53

Background and methodology



Background



Netsafe is an independent, not-for-profit organisation with a mission to promote online safety among New Zealanders.

In order to effectively meet New Zealanders' needs, Netsafe commissions an annual survey (excluding 2021 and 2022 when surveys were not undertaken) to understand the ongoing role of technology in people's lives and their experiences online. Each survey measure contains a mix of questions: (a) core questions which don't change over time, and (b) topical questions, focused on providing detailed information about an issue.

The 2023 survey was focused on:

- Understanding New Zealanders' digital behaviour,
- Assessing awareness of rights and options under the Harmful Digital Communications Act,
- Measuring awareness and use of support services for unwanted digital communications,
- Gaining insight into New Zealanders' experiences of unwanted communications and the impact these have on those who receive them,
- Measuring New Zealanders' online experiences of hate speech,
- Understanding New Zealanders' experiences as perpetrators of harmful digital communications.

Reporting



This year, the following reports have been produced:

- 1. APS 2023 results
- 2. Trended results for APS core questions 2017-2023
- 3. Online hate speech 2023 results and trends in 2018-2023
- 4. Māori population 2023 results

This report focuses on the 2023 APS results.

Methodology



1,665 New Zealanders completed an online survey between 12 and 28 June, 2023. The sample of survey participants were sourced from Kantar's online research and panel partners. The sample was structured to be representative of the population in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and region.

Additional booster interviews were conducted with people aged 16-29 years to ensure we had sufficient samples within this age group for in-depth analysis. Additional booster interviews were also conducted with Māori New Zealanders to ensure we have sufficient samples for analysis and to allow reporting of this group separately (see Māori population report).

All data were weighted by age within gender, ethnicity and region to ensure booster interviews did not affect the representativeness of the overall results.



Average survey length: 17 minutes



Response rate: 27%

Methodology

The overall results have been weighted to 2018 Census figures to align the data with Census counts for age, gender, ethnicity, and region.

Comparisons between Statistics New Zealand demographic data and the survey data suggested that some post-survey weighting was required to ensure balanced profiles and to correct for an over-representation of Māori and Pacific respondents and respondents aged 16-29 years (these respondents were over sampled during fieldwork to ensure robust analysis could be carried out on the individual subgroups).

	Unweighted sample proportion	Weighted sample proportion
16 to 17 years old	5.0%	3.3%
18 to 29 years old	40.0%	21.1%
30 to 39 years old	10.9%	16.5%
40 to 49 years old	12.3%	16.5%
50 to 59 years old	11.6%	16.4%
60 to 69 years old	10.0%	13.2%
70 + years old	10.2%	13.1%
Male	50.2%	48.7%
Female	49.5%	50.9%
Gender diverse*	0.4%	0.4%
Pacific peoples	12.0%	6.6%
Asian peoples	11.7%	14.9%

	Unweighted sample proportion	Weighted sample proportion
Northland	3.5%	3.7%
Auckland	32.4%	33.0%
Waikato	10.4%	9.5%
Bay of Plenty	6.4%	6.4%
Gisborne/Hawke's Bay	4.7%	4.4%
Taranaki/ Manawatū- Whanganui	8.2%	7.4%
Wellington	10.9%	10.9%
Tasman/Nelson/Marlborough/ West Coast	3.5%	4.2%
Canterbury	12.4%	13.1%
Otago/Southland	7.6%	7.3%

^{*}In this report those who are described as LGBTQI+ include: gender diverse people, those who are gay or lesbian, bisexual, Takatāpui, or another sexuality.

Key findings



Key findings

Digital competency



7 in 10 New Zealanders never or rarely require assistance with digital technology.

New Zealanders aged 50 plus, those with long-term disabilities or health issues, and women more likely than average to require assistance at least occasionally.

Most New Zealanders are competent in communicating respectfully online (88%), effectively searching online for what they want (88%), and contributing online in a positive manner (84%). Fewer feel competent when it comes to managing online challenges (75%) and filtering online material (62%).

Keeping protected online

86%

Most New Zealanders believe they know at least a fair amount about keeping safe and secure online.

Those aged under 40 have the greatest knowledge in this area (90%).



Two thirds have taken action to protect themselves or others online in the past year.

Those aged under 40 (61%) and Asian New Zealanders (56%) are less likely than average to have taken steps to protect themselves or others online in the past year.

Awareness of rights and options

New Zealanders are less aware of some aspects of their rights and options under the HDC Act.

You can be ordered to remove online content if the **district court considers it**is harmful to another person

77%

AWARE

The **illegality** of online behaviour that deliberately causes harm to a person

68%

AWARE

Ability to **lodge a complaint** about upsetting digital communications with an agency appointed by Government to help

AWARE

68%

Deliberately **causing harm** with digital communications is punishable with imprisonment or a fine

59%

AWARE

There are a set of **legal principles** that people are required to follow when communicating with others online

51%

AWARE

Key findings

Unwanted digital communications



Forty percent of New Zealanders have received unwanted digital communications in the past year.

Men, those aged under 40, those with long-term health issues, and those who are neurodiverse are more likely than average to have experienced unwanted digital communications in the last year.



Fourteen percent received unwanted communications which had a negative impact on their life.

Accessing support services

22%

Less than one in four of those who experienced unwanted digital communications contacted a support service.

Support is typically sought from an online service/platform or telecommunications company.

Of those who contacted a support service, around half (51%) found it helpful.

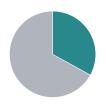
Perpetrators

9%

Nine percent of New Zealanders admit to having sent or shared at least one type of unwanted digital communication in the past year.

The communications sent or shared most commonly either said offensive things about someone or tried to embarrass someone online.

Victims



33% Most victims of unwanted digital communications are not also perpetrators.

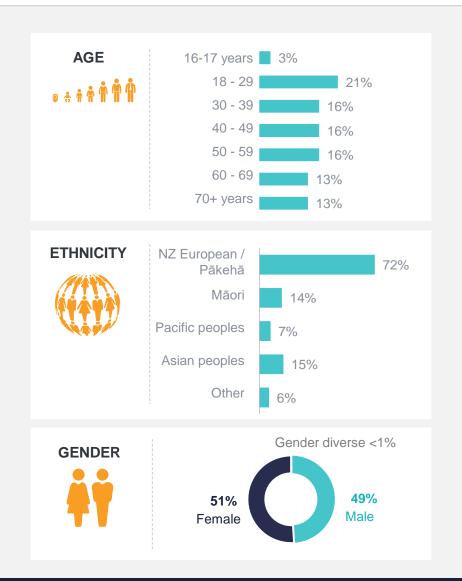
Though a much smaller proportion are both victims and perpetrators (8%), and an even smaller number are perpetrators but not victims (1%).



Sample profile



Weighted sample profile





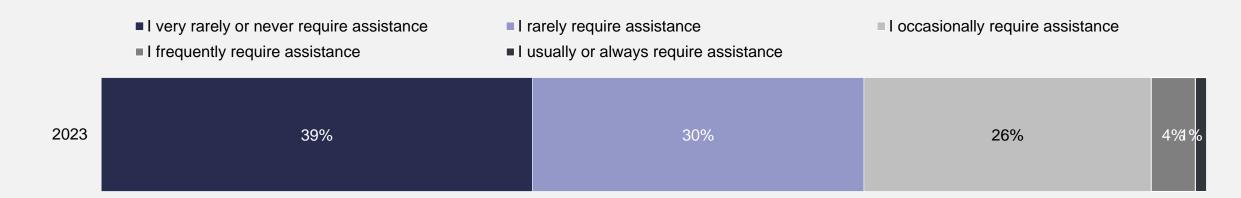
Use of technology

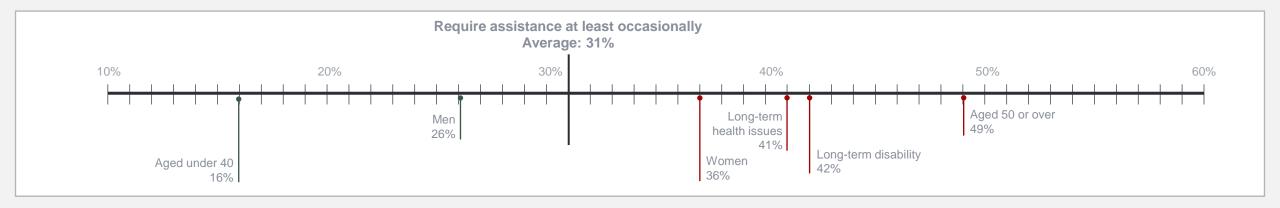


Digital competency

Two thirds of New Zealanders say they never or rarely require assistance when using digital devices. One third require assistance at least occasionally. New Zealanders aged 50 plus, those with long-term disabilities or health issues, and women more likely than average to require assistance at least occasionally.

Competence using digital technology





Specific digital competency

Most New Zealanders are competent in communicating respectfully online, effectively searching online for what they want, and contributing online in a positive manner. Fewer feel competent when it comes to managing online challenges and filtering online material.

Digital competency ratings



1 5

Specific digital competency

Different New Zealanders have weaknesses in different areas. The table below should be read as follows: those aged under 40, men, Asian New Zealanders, and those who are neurodiverse are less likely than average to be competent in communicating respectfully with others online.

Digital competency ratings - nett agree

	Average	Aged under 40 years	Aged 70 + years	Men	Women	Asian New Zealanders	Neurodiverse
	(n=1,665)	(n=931)	(n=169)	(n=835)	(n=824)	(n=194)	(n=153)
Communicate respectfully with others online, just as when speaking to them in person	88%	85%		85%		79%	79%
Know how to search the internet to find what they want	88%			86%		81%	
When contributing online, they generally do so in a positive manner	84%			79%			75%
Know how to manage online challenges such as privacy, passwords, basic security	75%		65%				
Know how to filter online material to find appropriate content	62%		47%		58%		

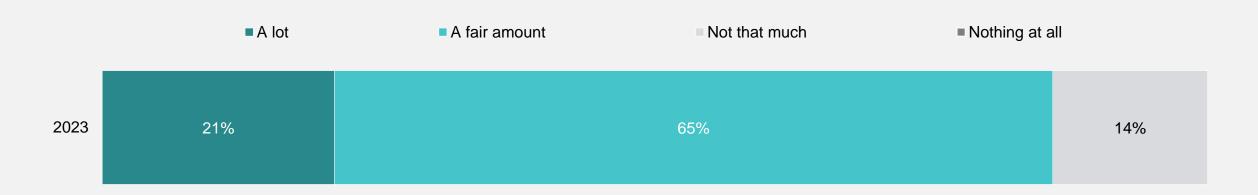
Keeping protected online

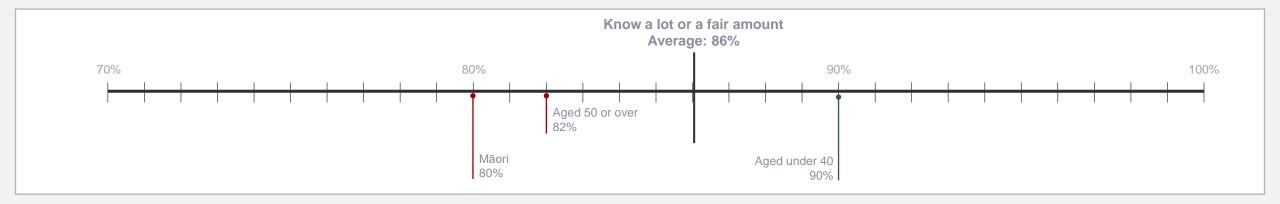


Knowledge of online safety

Eighty-six percent of New Zealanders know at least a fair amount about keeping safe and secure online. Those aged under 40 have the greatest knowledge in this area.

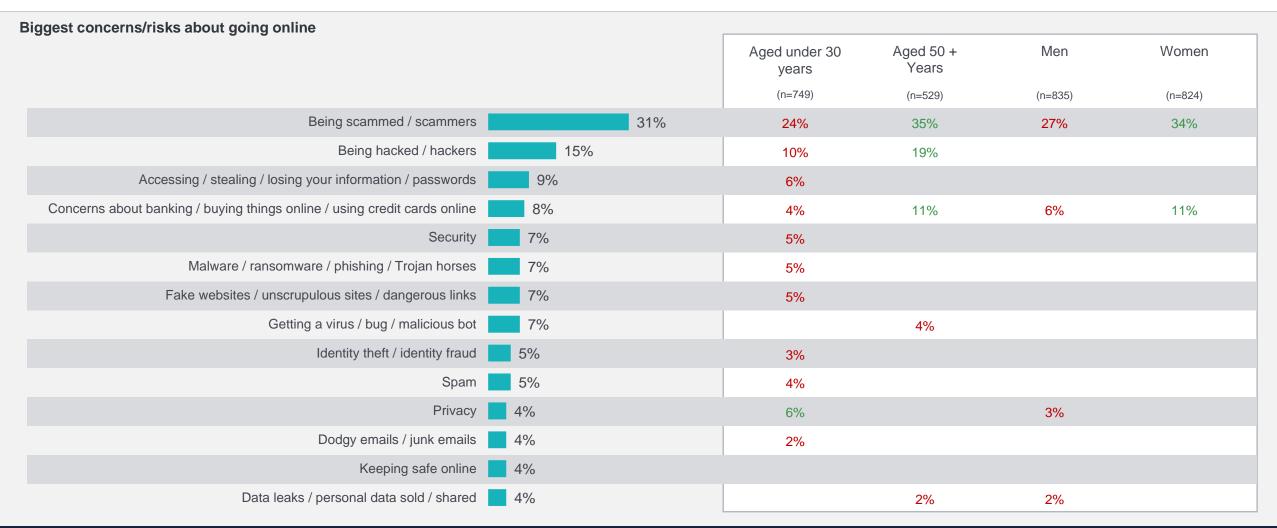






Biggest concerns and perceived risks about going online

New Zealanders have a wide range of concerns when it comes to online challenges and risks. Being scammed or hacked are of greatest concern. Many are also worried about having personal information, passwords, or banking information accessed. New Zealanders aged under 30 and men are least likely to be worried about online challenges and risks.





Concerns and risks about going online in their own words...

"Appropriate content for our children. Non legitimate websites which are harmful re our data/PC." Female, 40-49 years, Canterbury, Other ethnicity

"Using a credit card to purchase something. I normally use a reputable site but who knows how safe it is?" Male, 70+ years, Auckland, Pākehā

"My personal or private information being gathered and used because I tend to just hit ok for all cookies on most websites even though I know better (then I wonder why I get a bunch of dodgy spam emails)." Female, 30-39 years, Tasman / Nelson / Marlborough / West Coast, Pākehā

"Not knowing the dangers of the internet. Scams. Not having accessibility to the internet. Financial hardship." Male, 18-29 years, Auckland, Asian

"Safety from being hacked e.g., passwords." Male, 30-39 years, Auckland, Pasifika

"As a 17-year-old, apart from the speed of my internet connection, I believe there are several challenges and risks of going online that I need to be mindful of. One of the main challenges is maintaining online privacy and protecting personal information. With so much of our lives happening online, there's a risk of our data being compromised or misused by hackers or online scammers. It's important to be cautious about the information we share and to use strong passwords and security measures to safeguard our accounts." Male, 16-17 years, Auckland, Pasifika

"Doxxing, giving away details of your life which you don't necessarily want Joe Random to know, viruses / malware / phishing scams." Female, 18-29 years, Otago / Southland, Pākehā

"Feeling safe in chat forums, being catfished. I'm pretty clued up in online use. Not knowing who you're talking too. Internet now is creepy." Male, 18-29 years, Auckland, Pasifika

"Having my activity monitored or recorded by companies and governments, having my device hacked, theft of personal information, theft of credit card information, not receiving products bought online." Male, 50-59 years, Gisborne / Hawke's Bay, Other ethnicity

"The main risk of going online would be personal safety - there is always a risk of personal / financial information being stolen, location being made known etc."

Female, 18-29 years, Bay of Plenty, Pākehā

"1. System updates – changes / updates to systems / software such as Office. Things are supposedly improved; however, they often seem to be more difficult to use and occasionally I have great difficulty finding things. 2. Annoying linking between online searches and Social Media posts / advertising etc. i.e. I search 'red dress' and kazillions of red dresses seem to pop up everywhere I look. 3. Phishing emails, especially the ones that seem to get through all filters and internet security measures I put in place." Female, 50-59 years, Northland, Māori, Other ethnicity

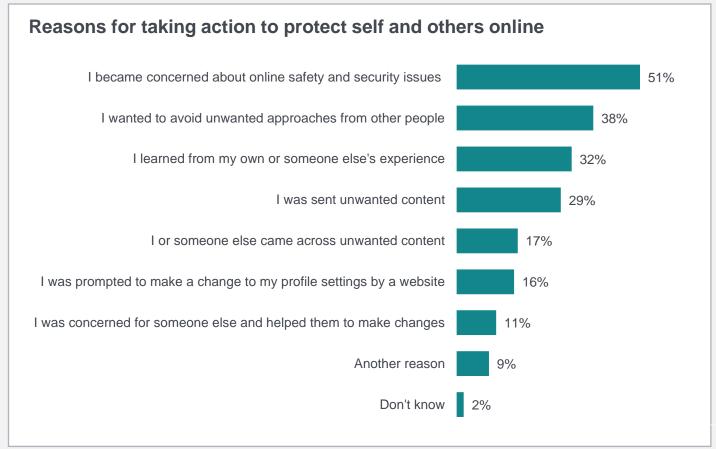




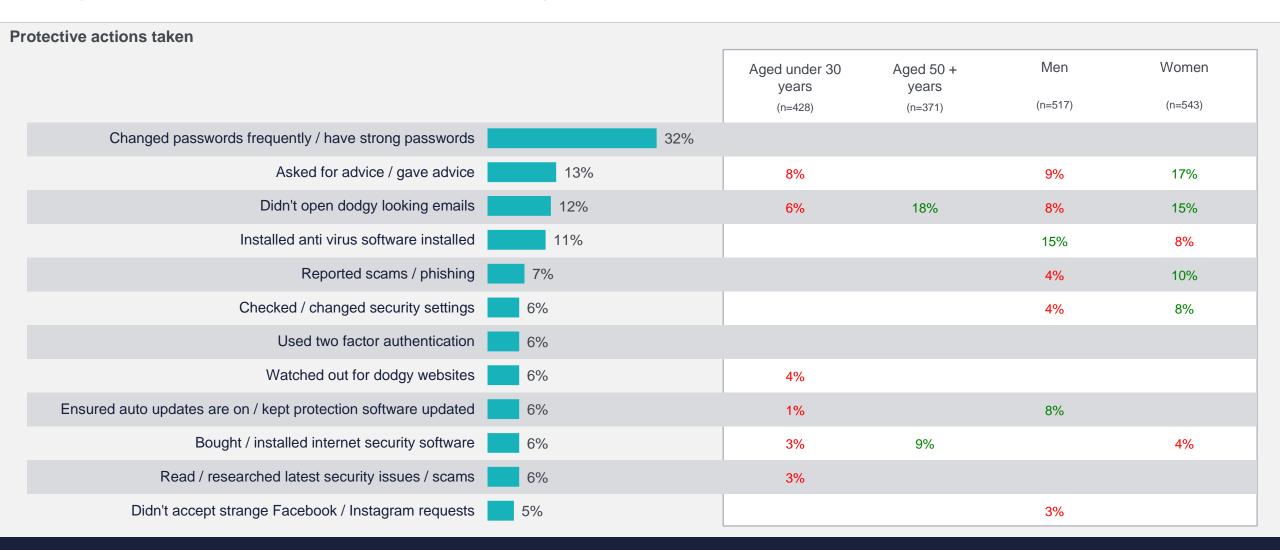
Two thirds of New Zealanders have acted in the past year to protect themselves or others from harm online. Primary reasons for action include: concern about online safety and security, and wanting to avoid unwanted approaches from others.



Those aged fifty and over (70%), Māori (70%), and Pākehā (68%) are more likely than average to have taken steps to protect themselves or others online in the past year. Those aged under 40 (61%) and Asian New Zealanders (56%) are less likely than average to have taken steps to protect themselves or others online in the past year.

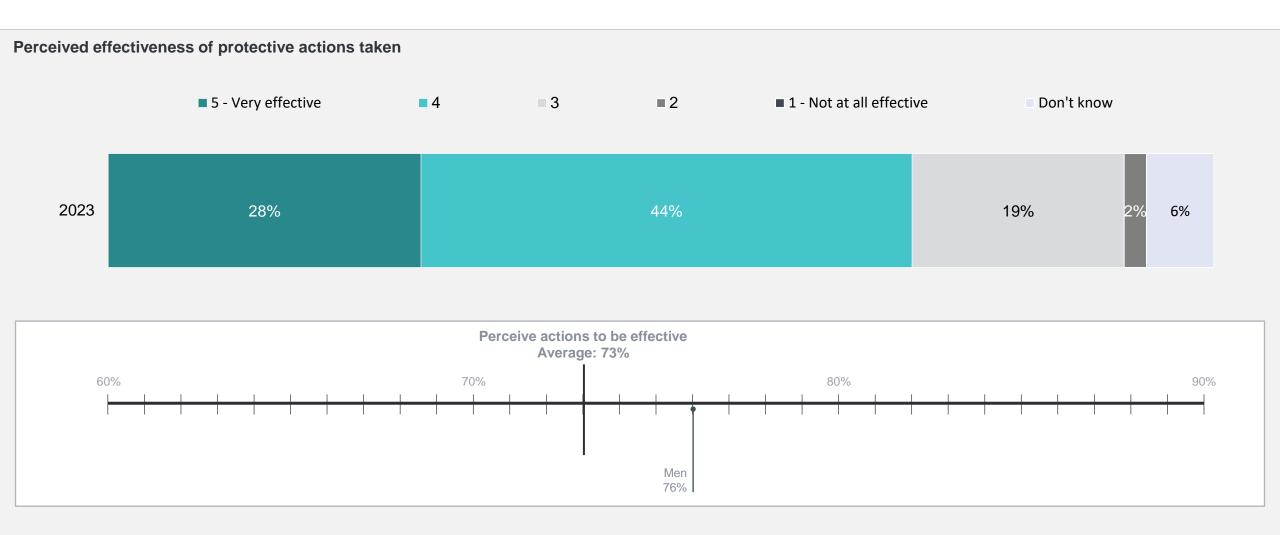


The most common protective measures undertaken is being conscientious with passwords (changing them frequently or choosing strong passwords). Those aged fifty and over and women are more likely than average to have taken protective actions recently.





Just over 70% of people who've acted feel their measures were effective. Men are most likely to feel this way.





Among those who have not taken action, nearly half say that they feel they have already done everything they can to protect themselves online. A quarter say they wouldn't know what actions to take to protect themselves or others online.

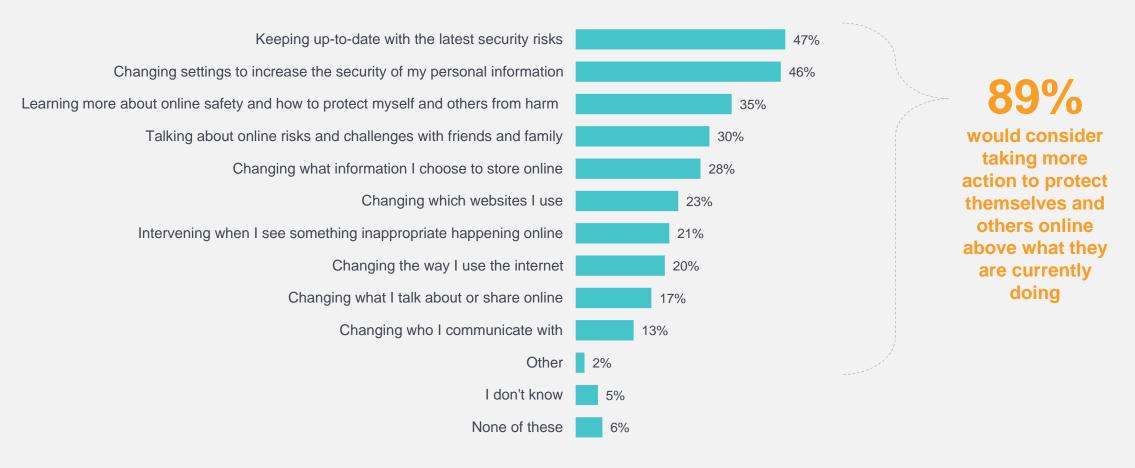
Reasons for not taking action



Consideration of future protective actions

Almost nine in ten New Zealanders say they would consider taking (further) action to protect themselves and others online. Actions most likely to be taken up include keeping up-to-date with the latest security risks and changing settings to increase the security of personal information.

Consideration of taking protective online actions in future (actions that are <u>not</u> currently being taken)



Consideration of future protective actions

Different New Zealanders would consider protecting themselves online in different ways. The table below should be read as follows: those aged under 30 are more likely than average to consider changing the way they use the internet.

Consideration of taking protective online actions in future (actions that are <u>not</u> currently being taken)

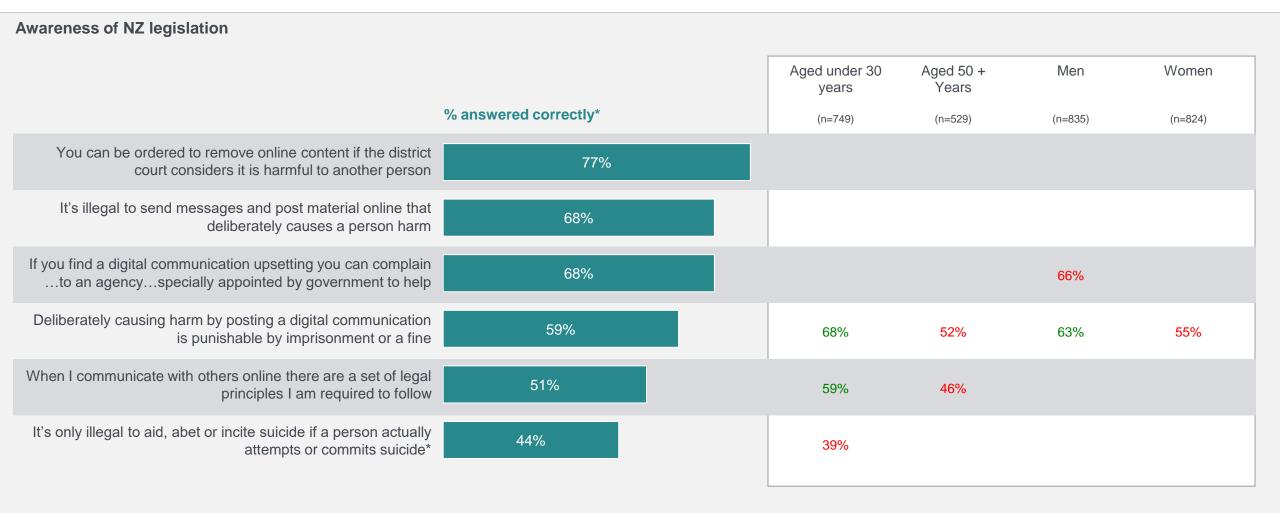
	Average	Aged under 30 years	Aged 70 years or older	Women	Māori	Pacific peoples	Asian peoples	Long-term health issues	Long-term disability	Neurodiver se
	(n=1,665)	(n=749)	(n=169)	(n=824)	(n=518)	(n=199)	(n=194)	(n=420)	(n=232)	(n=153)
Keeping up-to-date with the latest security risks	47%	39%			54%	56%				
Changing settings to increase the security of my personal information	46%	43%	34%	50%	54%	54%				
Learning more about online safety and how to protect myself	35%	28%	46%		41%					
Talking about online risks and challenges with friends and family	30%	22%	39%	35%	33%		22%			
Changing what information I choose to store online	28%		16%				37%			45%
Changing which websites I use	23%				27%	31%		28%	32%	
Intervening when I see something inappropriate happening online	21%	18%			26%			27%	34%	
Changing the way I use the internet	20%	28%	7%	24%		29%				
Changing what I talk about or share online	17%		8%		21%				23%	30%
Changing who I communicate with	13%		7%		18%		19%		20%	
Other	2%	1%								
I don't know	5%									
None of these	6%									

Awareness of rights and options



Awareness of legislation

New Zealanders are most familiar with legislation around removing harmful content, sending or posting deliberately harmful content, and complaining to a government agency if they find any digital communication upsetting.





Most important things <u>not</u> to do or include when communicating online

Trying to get someone to hurt themselves, sharing intimate images or recordings, and including indecent or obscene content, are the three most important things not to do or include in digital communication.

Digital communication should not*...

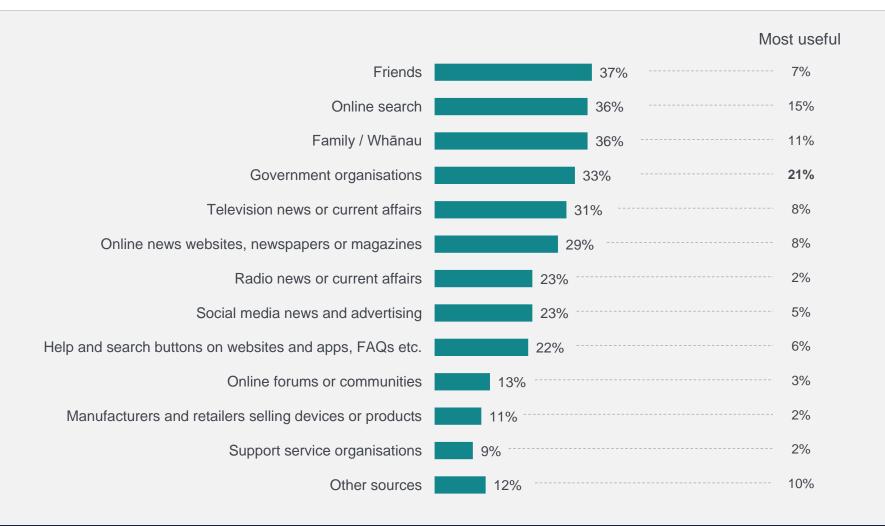
Rated in top 3 (combined, aged 16+)

Try to get someone to hurt themselves (e.g. self-harm, commit suicide)	58%	
Share intimate images or recordings of someone without their permission	49%	
Include indecent or obscene content (e.g., extreme violence or sexually explicit)	40%	
Share other personal information about someone without their permission	33%	
Insult someone because of their personal what they look like, their lifestyle, where they come from or what they believe in	28%	
Threaten to hurt someone or damage their property	27%	
Be used as a way to get back at someone by harassing them	19%	
Make a false allegation about someone	17%	
Encourage other people to send messages to someone as a way to try and harm them	17%	
Include content that most people would agree is offensive to the person receiving it	11%	

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Finding information and advice about how to stay safe online

At least a third of New Zealanders source information to stay safe online from friends or whānau, online searches, and government organisations. Government organisations such as Netsafe are deemed to be the most useful sources of information.



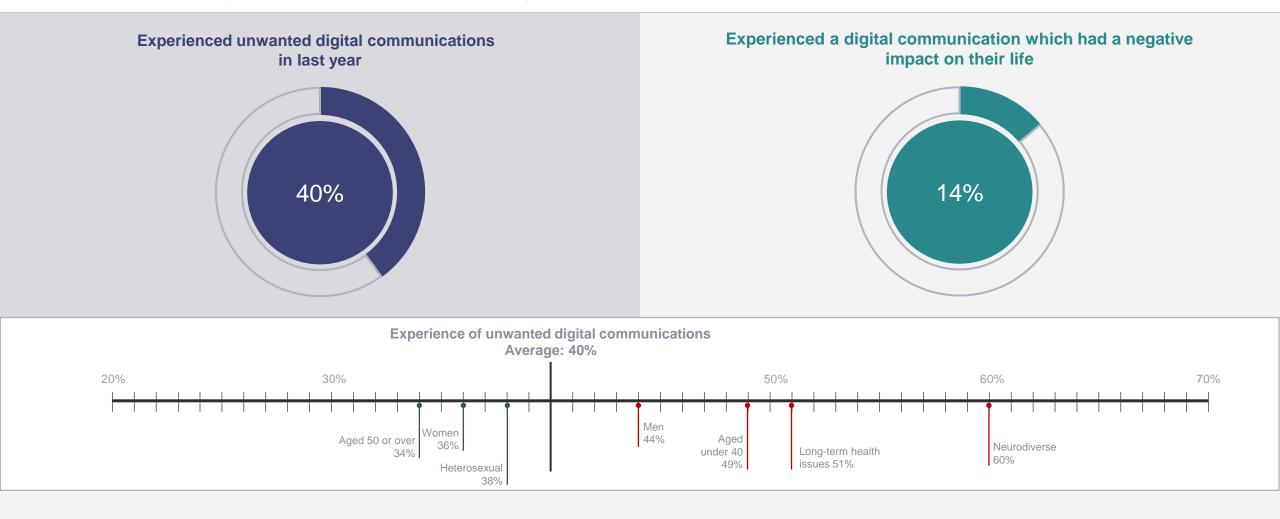


Experience of unwanted digital communications



New Zealanders' experience of unwanted digital communications

Forty percent of New Zealanders have experienced unwanted digital communications in the last year. Fourteen percent experienced a digital communication which had a negative impact on their life. Men, those aged under 40, those with long-term health issues, and those who are neurodiverse are more likely than average to have experienced unwanted digital communications in the last year.



New Zealanders' experience of unwanted digital communications

Twenty-one percent of New Zealanders have received multiple unwanted communications from the same person. Fourteen percent have had someone make an unwanted sexual advance on them.

% Type of unwanted digital communications Nett (yes) Received many unwanted communications from the same person 14% 21% 6% Made an unwanted sexual advance to you 4% 10% 14% Said offensive things about you, your lifestyle or your religious or political beliefs 4% 8% 12% Made a false allegation about your personal or professional life 5% 7% 12% Tried to embarrass or humiliate you online 5% 6% 11% Included violent or sexual content you thought was indecent or obscene 11% Yes – once Excluded you from a peer or friendship group 4% 5% 9% ■ Yes – more than once Stalked you by monitoring your online activity to intimidate or control you 5% 8% 4% Physically threatened or intimidated you Came from people that had been encouraged by someone else to try to harm you 3% 5% Tried to get you to hurt yourself 2% 3% 5% 3% 5% Shared intimate images or recordings of you without your permission Was harmful in another way 4% 7% 11%

New Zealanders' experience of unwanted digital communications

New Zealanders under the age of 40, men, Auckland residents, LGBTQIA+ community members, those with long-term health issues, and those who are neurodiverse are more likely that average to be the target of unwanted digital communications.

Unwanted digital communications - nett yes

	Average	Aged under 40 years	Men	Auckland residents	LGBTQIA+	Have long- term health issues	Neurodiverse
	(n=1,665)	(n=931)	(n=835)	(n=539)	(n=177)	(n=420)	(n=153)
Received many unwanted communications from the same person	21%					29%	32%
Made an unwanted sexual advance to you	14%	20%			23%	22%	27%
Said offensive things about you, your lifestyle or your religious or political beliefs	12%	17%					
Made a false allegation about your personal or professional life	12%	18%	14%				21%
Tried to embarrass or humiliate you online	11%	16%			18%	17%	21%
Included violent or sexual content you thought was indecent or obscene	11%	16%				16%	26%
Excluded you from a peer or friendship group	9%	15%				14%	17%
Stalked you by monitoring your online activity to intimidate or control you	8%	13%	10%	11%		15%	18%
Physically threatened or intimidated you	7%	13%	10%	11%		11%	15%
Came from people that had been encouraged by someone else to try to harm you	5%	9%	7%	8%		8%	13%
Tried to get you to hurt yourself	5%	9%	7%	8%		8%	10%
Shared intimate images or recordings of you without your permission	5%	10%		9%		8%	13%
Was harmful in another way	11%	16%	14%			16%	22%

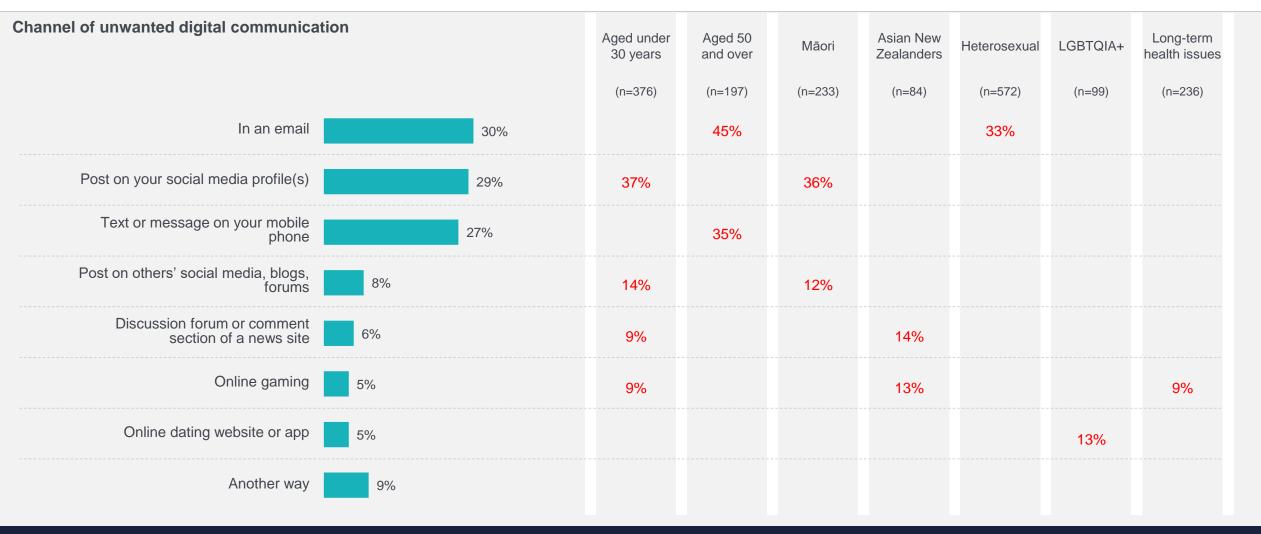
Senders of unwanted digital communication

More than half of unwanted digital communications were sent to New Zealanders by an unknown person. Those under the age of 40 are more likely than average to be targeted by acquaintances, friends, or current or former partners.



Channels for unwanted communications and connection to offline events

Unwanted communications are generally sent via email or text or posted on victims' social media profiles. Different groups tend to be targeted in different ways. For example, those under 30 are more likely than average to be targeted on social media while those 50 and over are more likely than average to be targeted via email or text.



Channels for unwanted communications and connection to offline events

For seventeen percent of those receiving unwanted communications, this experience was part of a wider issue also happening offline. People who are more likely than average to be targeted online and offline are: aged under 30, have long-term health issues or disabilities, or are neurodiverse.

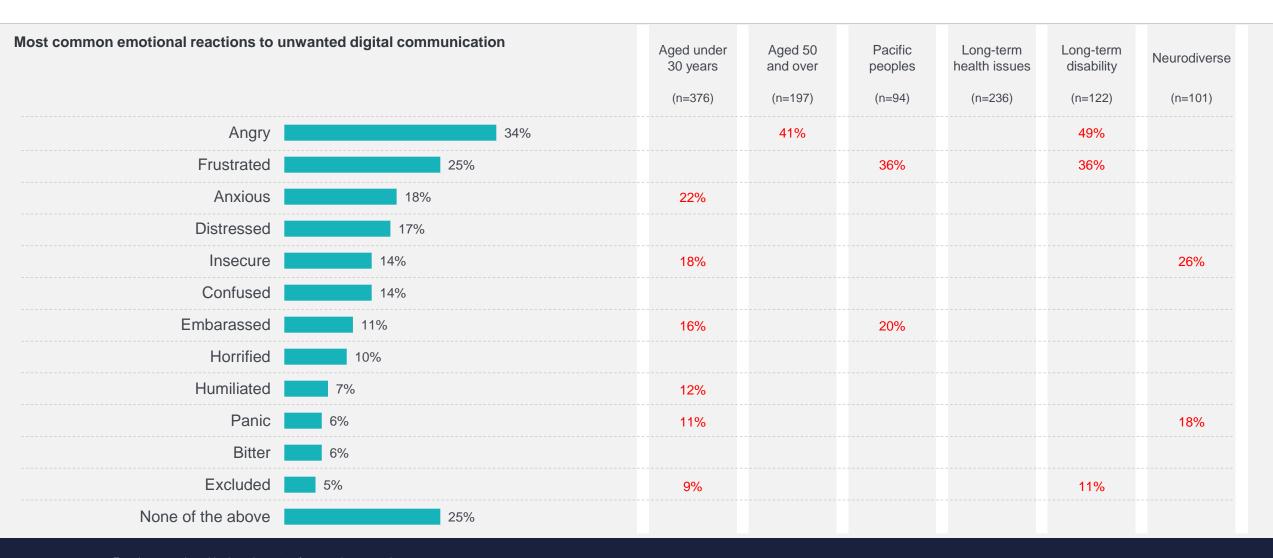




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Impact of unwanted digital communications

Among those receiving unwanted communications, the most common emotional reactions are anger and frustration.



Impact of unwanted digital communications

A third of those receiving unwanted communications say their daily lives were impacted as a result. Auckland residents, those with long term health issues, LGBTQIA+ community members, those aged under 30, those who are neurodiverse, and Asian New Zealanders are more likely than average to be impacted by these communications.



Impact of unwanted digital communications varies by type of unwanted communication

Unwanted communications that are designed to get people to hurt themselves are the most damaging. Communications that encourage others to harm the victim, share intimate images or recordings without consent, or physically threaten, intimidate or stalk the victim are also particularly harmful.

Impact of unwanted digital communication on daily life by type of communication





Responses to unwanted digital communications

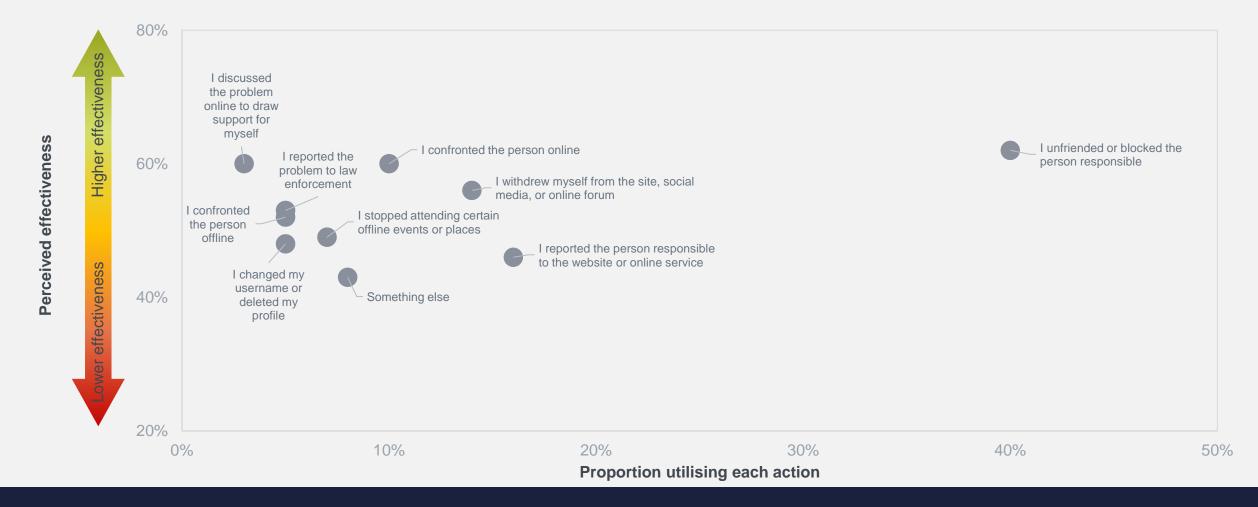
The most common action taken by people who receive an unwanted digital communications is to unfriend or block the person responsible.

Response to situation		Aged under 30 years	Auckland residents	LGBTQIA+	Long-term health issues	Long-term disability	Neurodiverse
		(n=376)	(n=246)	(n=99)	(n=236)	(n=122)	(n=101)
I unfriended or blocked the person responsible	4	10%	31%			56%	
I reported the person responsible to the website or online service	16%						
I withdrew myself from the site, social media, or online forum	14%						
I confronted the person online	10%	13%		20%			
I stopped attending certain offline events or places	7%						20%
I changed my username or deleted my profile	5%	10%					
I reported the problem to law enforcement	5%	7%			9%		12%
I confronted the person offline	5%	8%					
I discussed the problem online to draw support for myself	3%	6%					13%
Something else	8%	4%					
None of the above	25%	21%				14%	

Perceived effectiveness of responses to unwanted digital communications

Unfriending or blocking the person responsible, confronting the person online, or discussing the problem online were perceived to be the most effective responses.

Perceived effectiveness of response of the different reactions

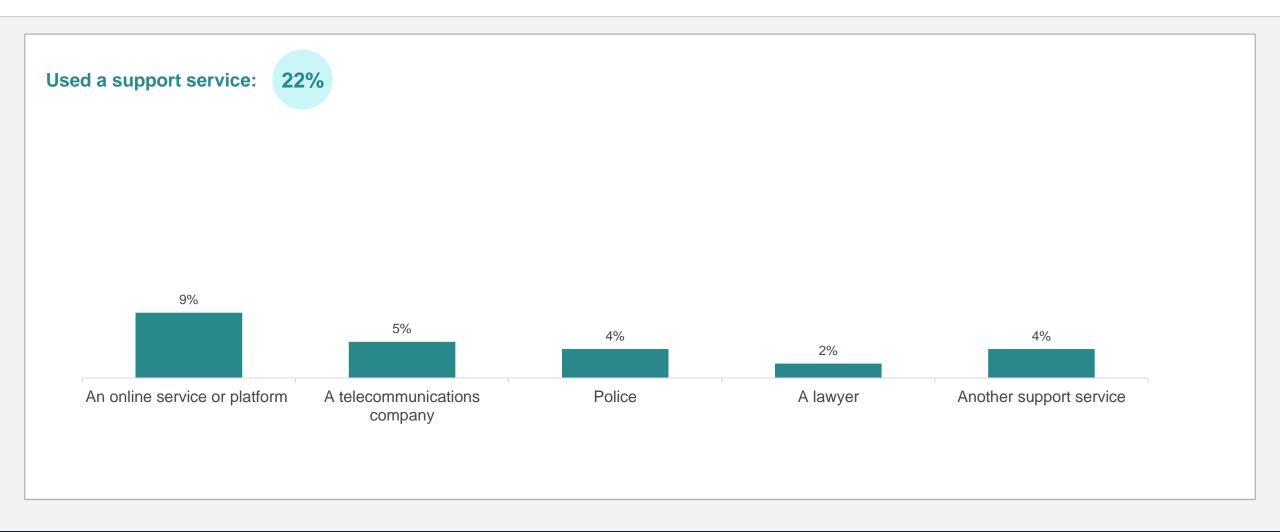


Accessing support services



Use of support services

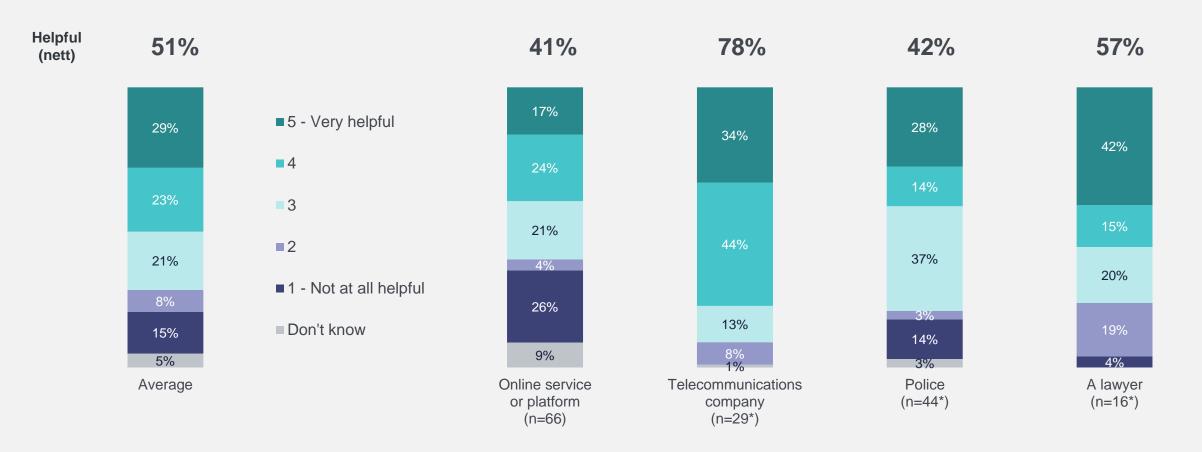
Twenty-two percent of those who received unwanted digital communications seeked out a support service to help them. Nearly half of these people sought support from from an online service or platform.



Helpfulness of support services

Just over half of those who sought out support thought it was helpful to them. Those who sought help from their telecommunications company were most likely to find the support helpful.

Helpfulness of support received



Reasons support was not helpful in their own words...

"The police made me feel as though I was in the wrong by believing the people that were spreading this information were the victims."

Male, 16-17 years, Manawatū-Whanganui, Māori

"It was on Facebook - the team you report stuff to deemed it as "not a violation of their guidelines" when it's quite clear that the words were intending harm." Female, 18-29 years, Auckland, Pākehā, Asian

"Blocked the wrong person."

Male, 18-29 years, Otago / Southland, Asian

"Anytime you report anything on Facebook weather it being harassment, bullying or a scammer you can report it all you like and nothing gets done, they say it's not offensive or the fact it's a scam and it stays up."

Female, 30-39 years, Taranaki / Manawatū-Whanganui, Pākehā, Māori

"It only took note of the message I reported on. It was unable to stop the messages." Male, 70+ years, Northland, Pākehā "They did nothing and instead told me that what the person said was not offensive even though it clearly was racial bullying."

Male, 30-39 years, Wellington, Asian

"They never responded to my complaint and still getting these through messenger as friends request."

Male, 60-69 years, Auckland, Pasifika

"Victim blaming, advised not to take the issue further."

Female, 30-39 years, Tasman / Nelson / Marlborough / West Coast, Pākehā

"Seem to have two sets of standards."

Male, 50-59 years, Waikato, Pākehā, Māori

"Nothing was done."
Female, 40-49 years, Auckland, Pasifika

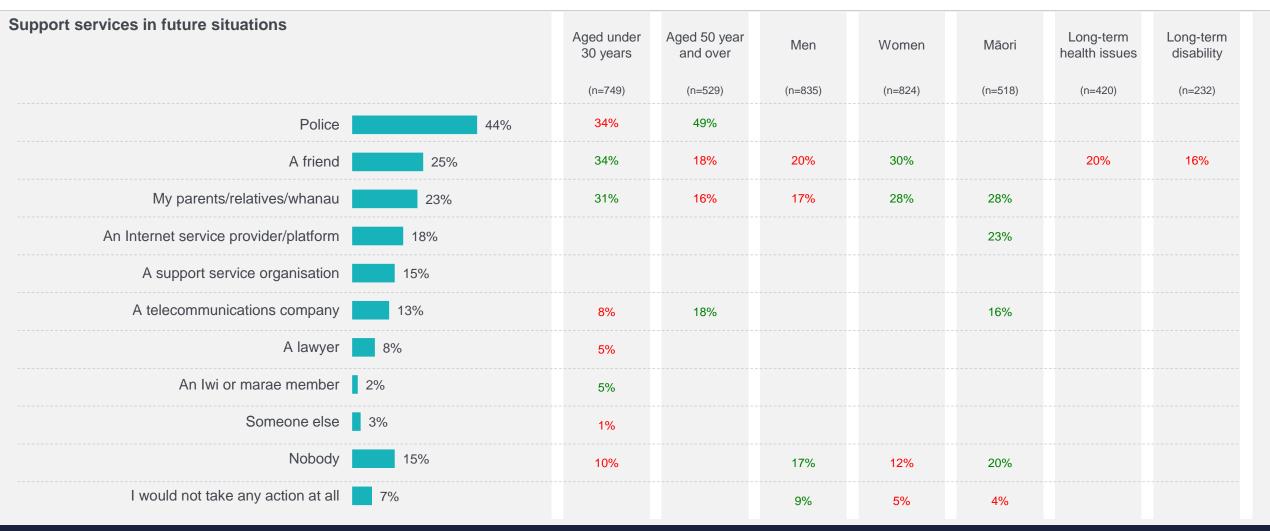
"Their definition of community standards is confusing and very liberal." Male, 70+ years, Bay of Plenty, Other ethnicity





Future consideration

Nearly half of respondents said they would contact the police if they received unwanted digital communications. A quarter would turn to a friend or family member for support. Those under the age of 30 are more likely than average to seek support from friends and family while those 50 and over are more likely than average to contact the police.

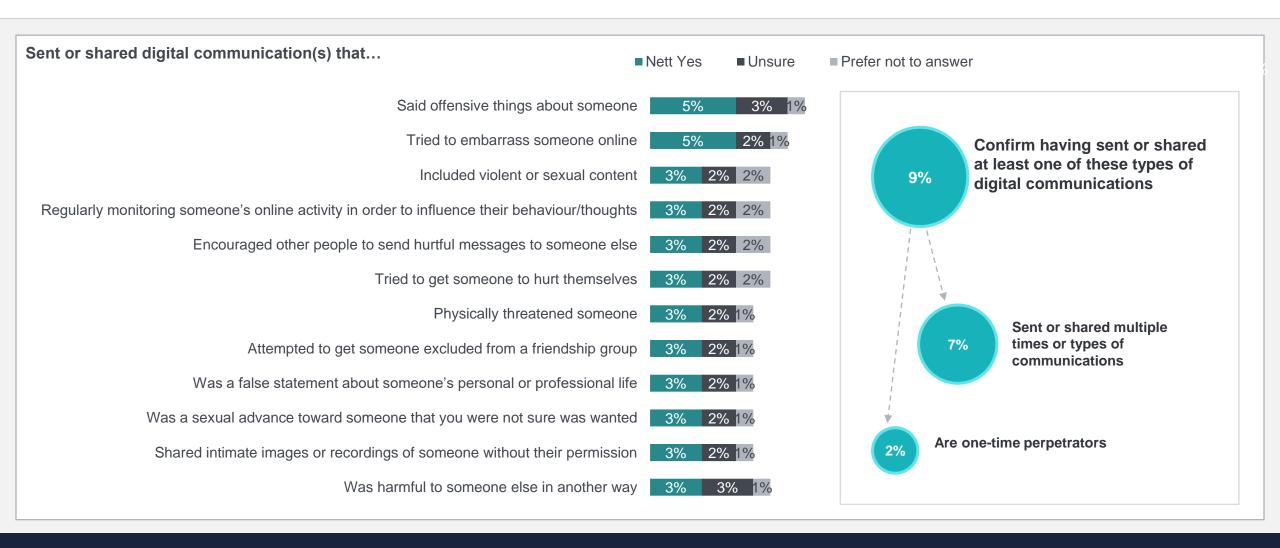


Perpetrators



New Zealanders sending or sharing unwanted digital communications

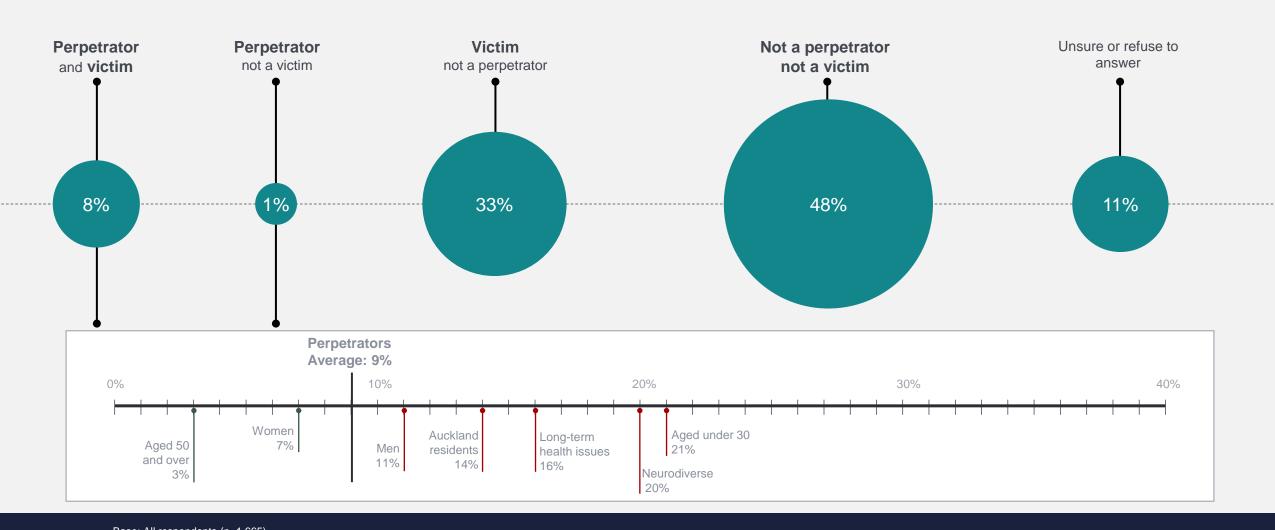
One in ten New Zealanders admit to having sent or shared at least one type of unwanted digital communication in the past year.





Overlap between victims and perpetrators

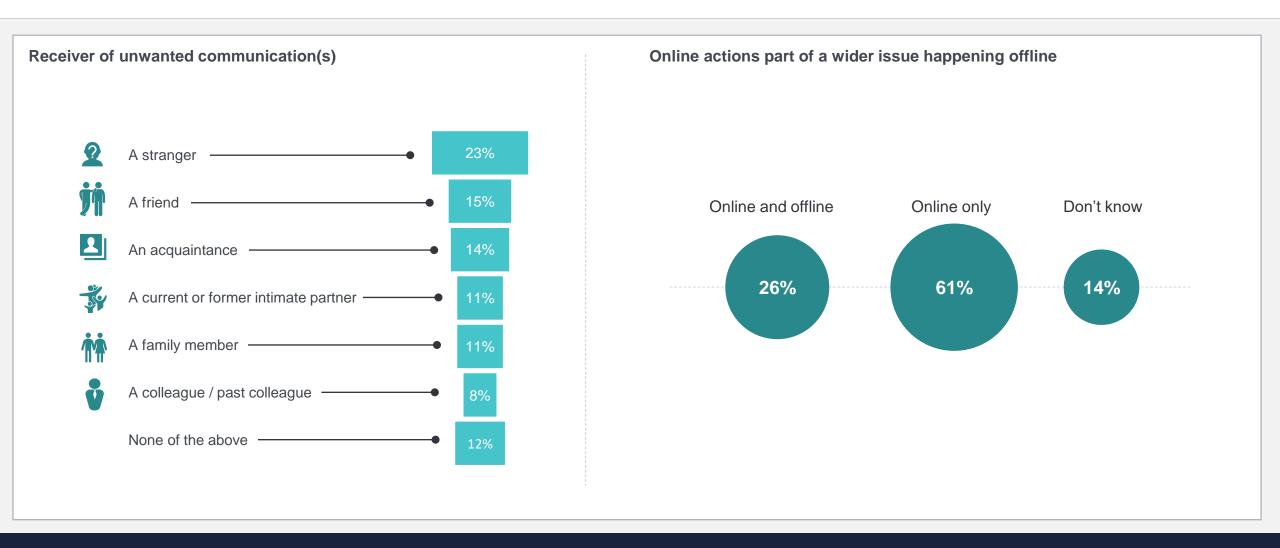
Most perpetrators of harmful digital communications are also victims. Just one percent of New Zealanders are perpetrators but not victims. However, most victims are not perpetrators. Those who are more likely than average to be perpetrators are: men, Auckland residents, those with long-term health issues, those who are neurodiverse, and those aged under 30.





Proximity to victim of unwanted digital communication and connection to offline events

A quarter of the time, the victims of unwanted digital communications are unknown to the perpetrator. Sixty-one percent of the time, the issue is online only.



Channels and reasons for unwanted communications

Posting on social medias and texting are the most common forms of communication utilised by perpetrators. Fourteen percent of perpetrators cite revenge as their main motive.

Communication method used	
Post on others' social media, blogs or forums	26%
Text or message via mobile phone	25%
Post on your social media profile(s)	23%
Email	22%
Discussion forum or comment section of a news site	17%
Online dating website or app	11%
Online gaming	7%
Another way	3%

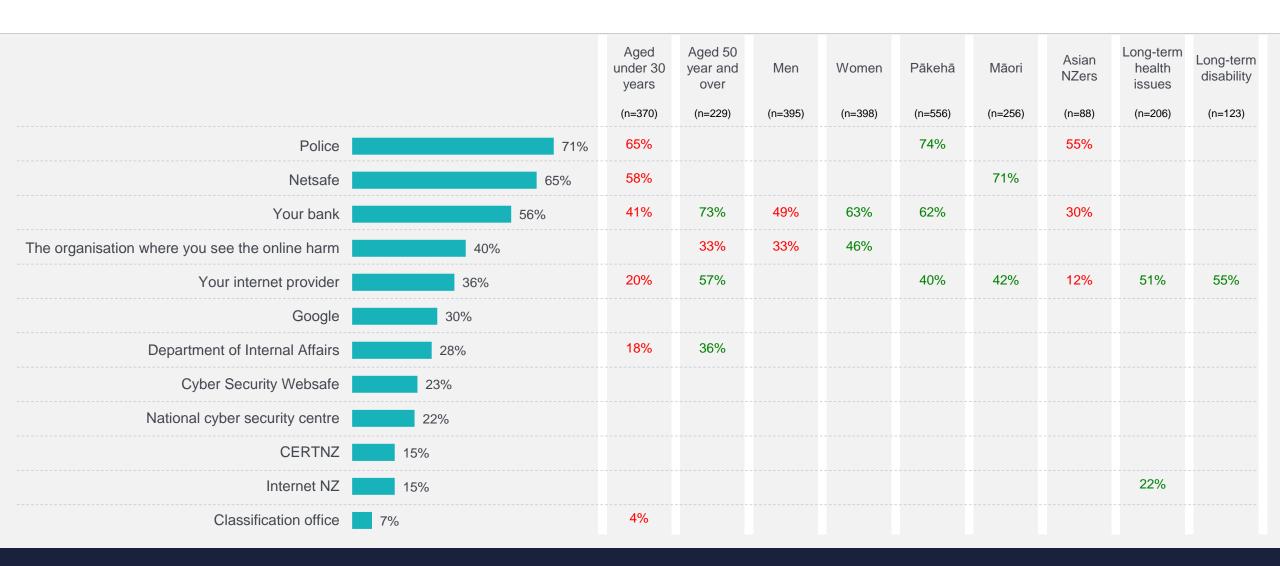
Reason for communication	
Get revenge or get back at them	14%
For a joke	10%
Embarrass the person	10%
Influence their behaviour or thoughts	10%
To scare them	8%
For sexual pleasure	6%
To get money from them	6%
Other	16%
Don't know	17%

Reporting harmful content



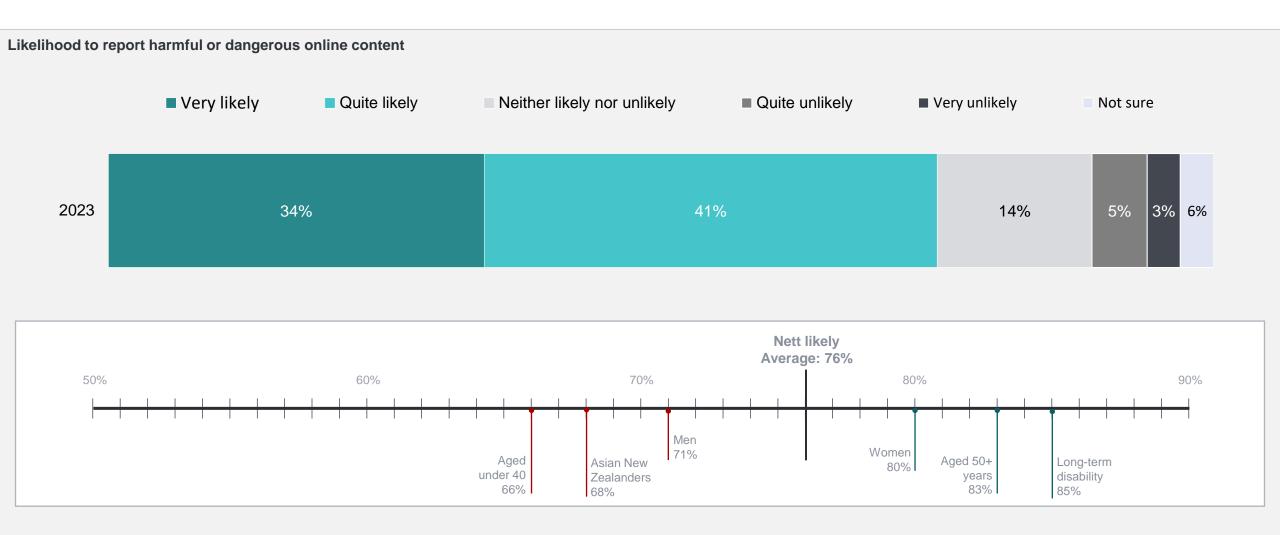
Awareness of organisations for reporting harmful online content

Among those who have received unwanted digital communications, around two thrids are aware the Police and Netsafe deal with such issues. Those under 30, men and Asian New Zealanders generally have lower knowledge of the different organisations available.



Likelihood to report harmful online content

Three quarters of New Zealanders are likely to report harmful or dangerous online content. This proportion is significantly higher among women, those aged 50 years and older, and those with a long-term disability.



Reasons for being likely or unlikely to report harmful content

Helping to protect other people is the most salient reason mentioned by New Zealanders who would likely report harmful online content. The main reasons offered by people unlikely to report harmful content were not wanting to bother and not knowing where or who to report it to.





FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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