July 2021

Global Tech Support Scam Research





Study overview

Why

 The goal of this research was to understand the incidence and consequences of four types of technology scams. Measure the monetary, productivity and psychological impacts to consumers across multiple geographic and demographic groups

Who

• Web based survey of 16,254 adult (18+) internet users in 16 countries worldwide (~1,000 per country). Sample within each country weighted to align with internet user population on age, gender, and region.

What

- Online survey (optimized for PC or mobile)
- Average survey length = 10 minutes

When

• May 6-17, 2021



Where

2021 Countries	2018
Australia	included
Brazil	included
Canada	included
Colombia	NEW
Finland	NEW
France	Included
Germany	Included
India	Included
Japan	Included
Mexico	Included
Netherlands	NEW
Singapore	Included
Spain	NEW
Switzerland	included
United Kingdom	included
United States	included

Four markets from 2018 survey (China, Denmark, South Africa, New Zealand) were not included in 2021)

The state of tech support scams in 2021

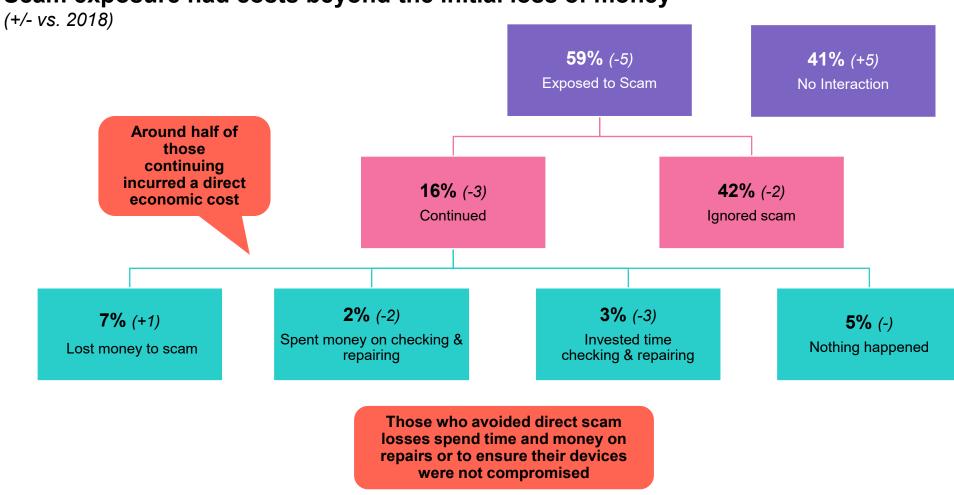
- Continuing the trend from 2018, fewer consumers were exposed to scams: Globally the number of interactions reported fell by 5-points to 59%, largely driven by a reduction in scams involving pop-up ads or windows (37% vs. 45% in 2018) and redirects to websites (30% vs. 37%).
- However, those exposed were more likely to have lost money: Despite a subsequent reduction in consumers continuing with a scam (16% vs. 19%), the number of people directly losing money increased slightly from 6% to 7% in 2021. On a positive note, more of those who lost money were able to recover some, and fewer people spent spent time or money on checking and repairing a computer.
- Sensitive financial information continues to be at risk: While scammers most commonly asked consumers to download software or go to a website (with 30% reporting computer problems), the proportion of consumers asked for their SSN increased since 2018, and 16% were asked to their banking website. Not surprising, there was an increase in the number of consumers reporting fraudulent use of credit/debit or store cards or fraudulent use of online stores, accounting for the increase in money lost.
- Consumers are more wary of scam risk: Consumers have grown more sceptical of unsolicited contact, with 79% thinking it unlikely that a reputable company would contact them in this way (+5 since 2018), and 86% unlikely to trust it (+3).
- Younger consumers and males continue to be most at risk: As in 2018, it is Gen Z, Millennials, and Males who were hardest hit and most likely to have lost money; likely due to younger generations being more 'online' and engaging in more risky activities. Interestingly, confidence in computer usage and the internet has decreased across all ages, opening up potential for further education.



Tech support scam landscape 2021

Anatomy of tech support scams

Scam exposure had costs beyond the initial loss of money



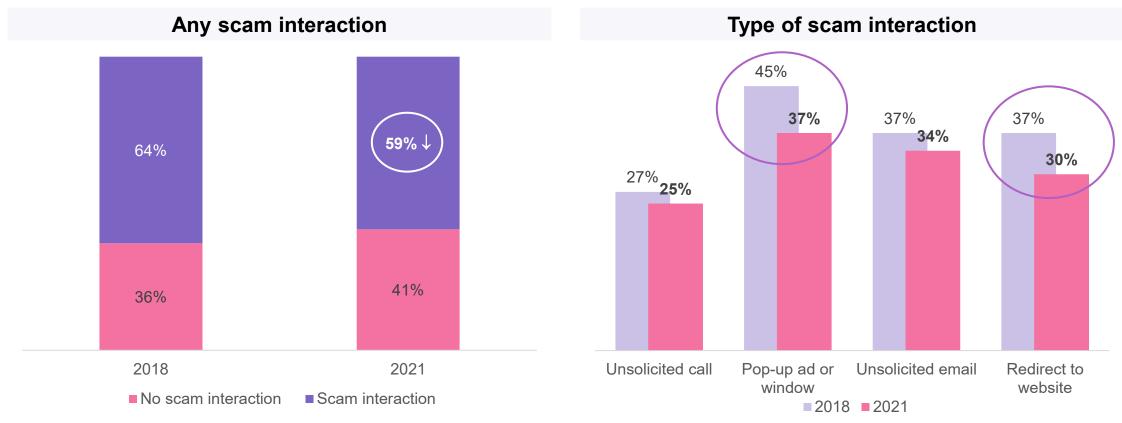
Base: Total Note: Boxes may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Q1a. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following in the last year or so (January 2020 to present).

Q2. For each of the interactions you experienced, please indicate which actions you took. If you experienced more than one interaction of each type, think of the most recent one you can recall. Q8. As a result of this most recent interaction, have you lost any money? If so, how much?

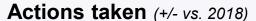
Q12. To date, how much money, if any, has it cost you to fix or investigate further as to whether your computer had been compromised after this interaction Q12A. To date, how much time has it taken to fix or investigate further as to whether your computer had been compromised after this most recent interaction?

Fewer scam interactions were reported in 2021, with a drop in pop-up ads or windows and redirects to websites fuelling the decline





As in 2018, consumers were most likely to continue with telephone calls and website redirects



Base: Those who experienced each interaction

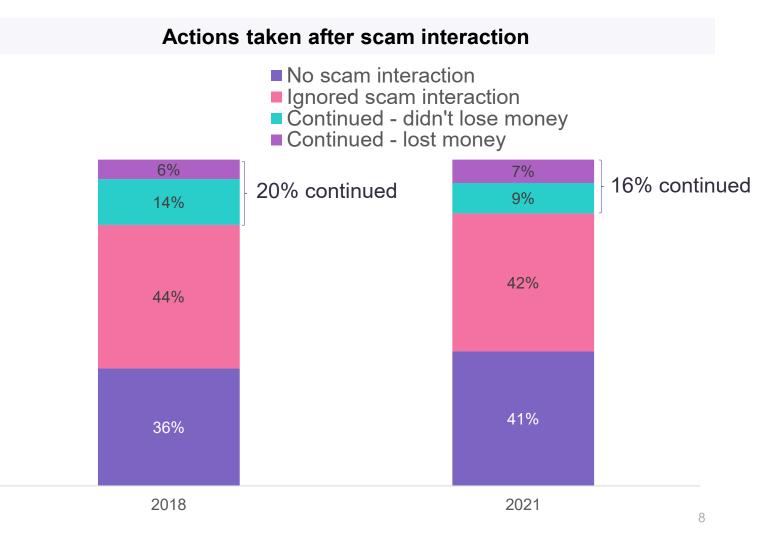




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Fewer scams also meant fewer people continued with an interaction

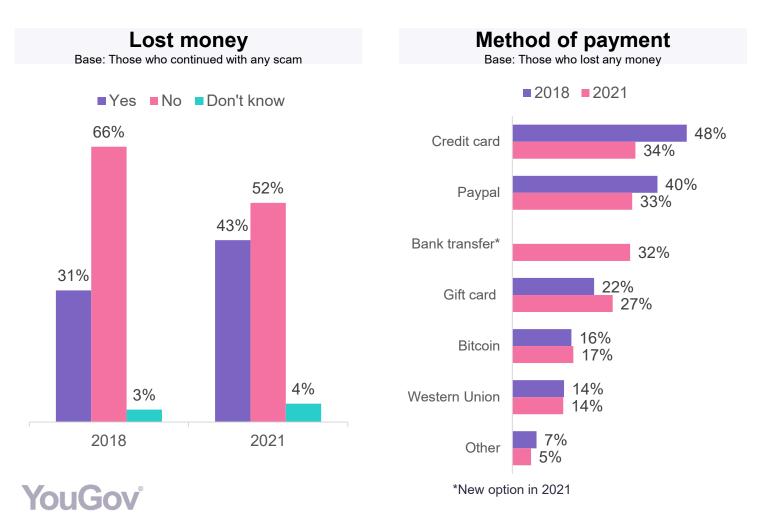
- Around one-in-six consumers (16%) were tricked into continuing with a potentially fraudulent activity, slightly down on 2018 (20%)
- ▶ A slightly higher proportion went on to lose money in the interaction (7% vs. 6%)

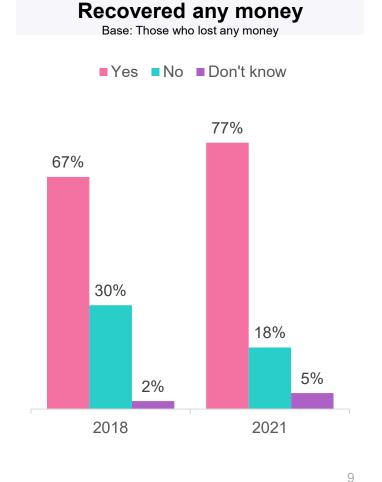




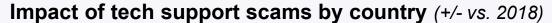
Rase: Total

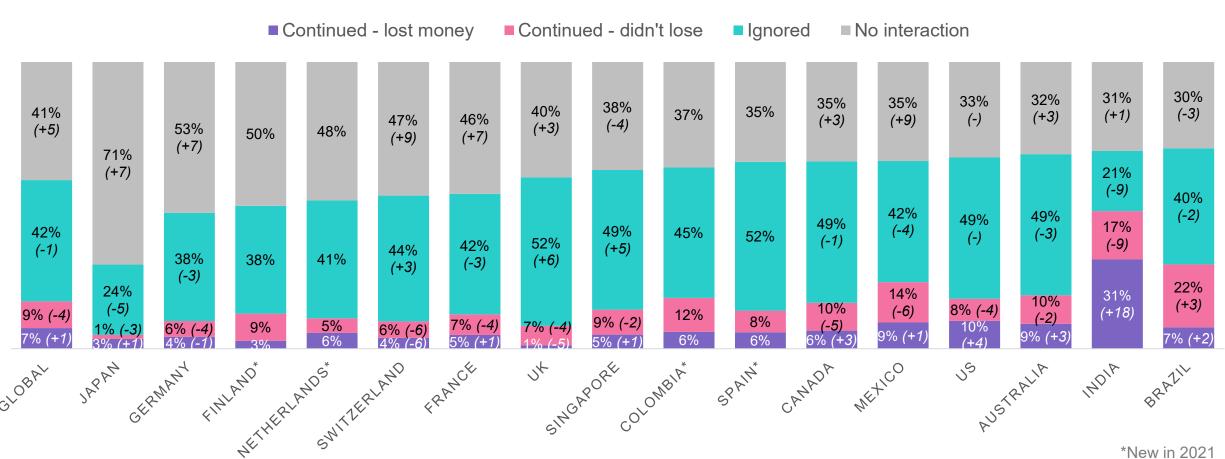
Although a higher proportion lost money through a scam interaction, more were able to recover any of it





At the global level, tech support scams were less prevalent



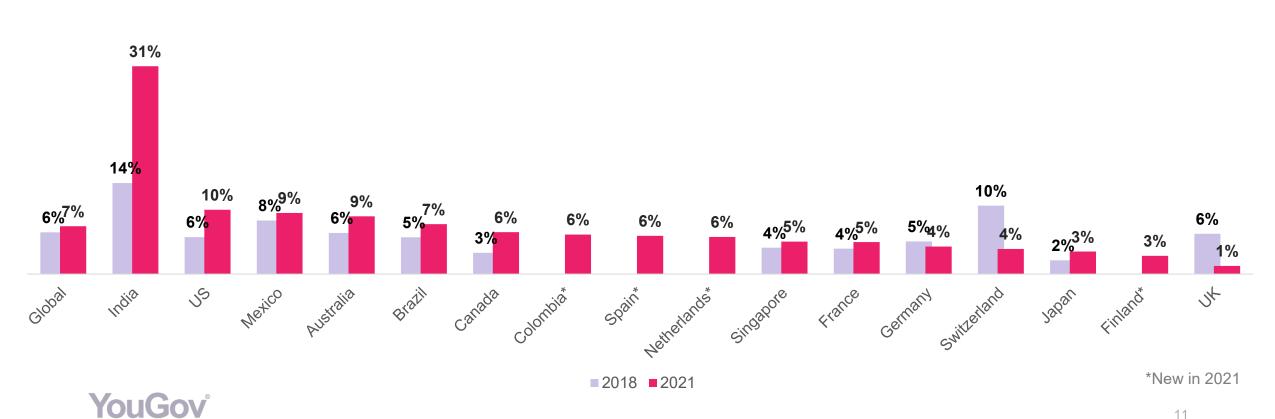


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Globally the number of people losing money remained consistent India recorded the biggest increase, with almost a third losing money through a tech support scam

Percent who continued and lost money

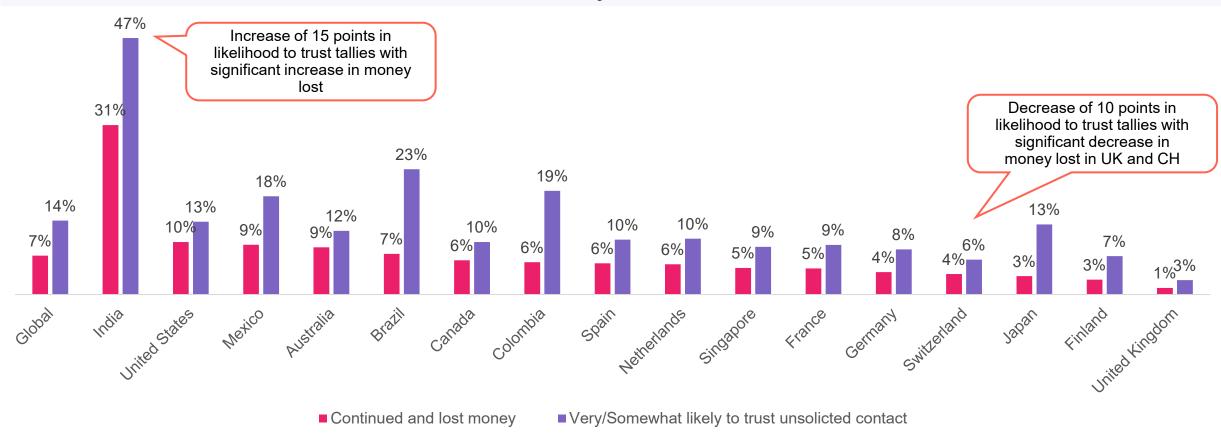


Base: Total

Q1a. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following in the last year or so (January 2020 to present). Q2. For each of the interactions you experienced, please indicate which actions you took. If you experienced more than one interaction of each type, think of the most recent one you can recall. Q8. As a result of this most recent interaction, have you lost any money? If so, how much?

Losing money tends to correlate with trust in unsolicited contact, where consumers are more trusting, more lose money

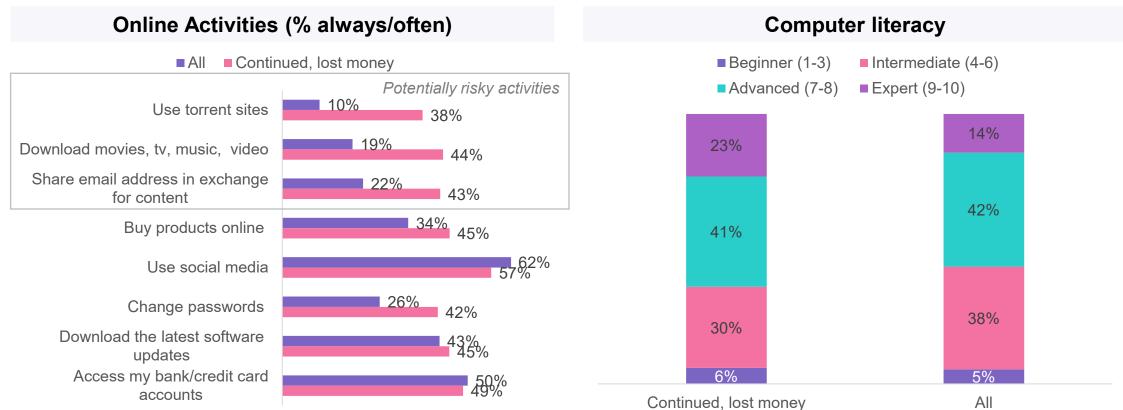
Percent who continued and lost money / Likelihood to trust unsolicited contact



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Those who lost money engaged more in risky activities and displayed (over) confidence in their computer literacy





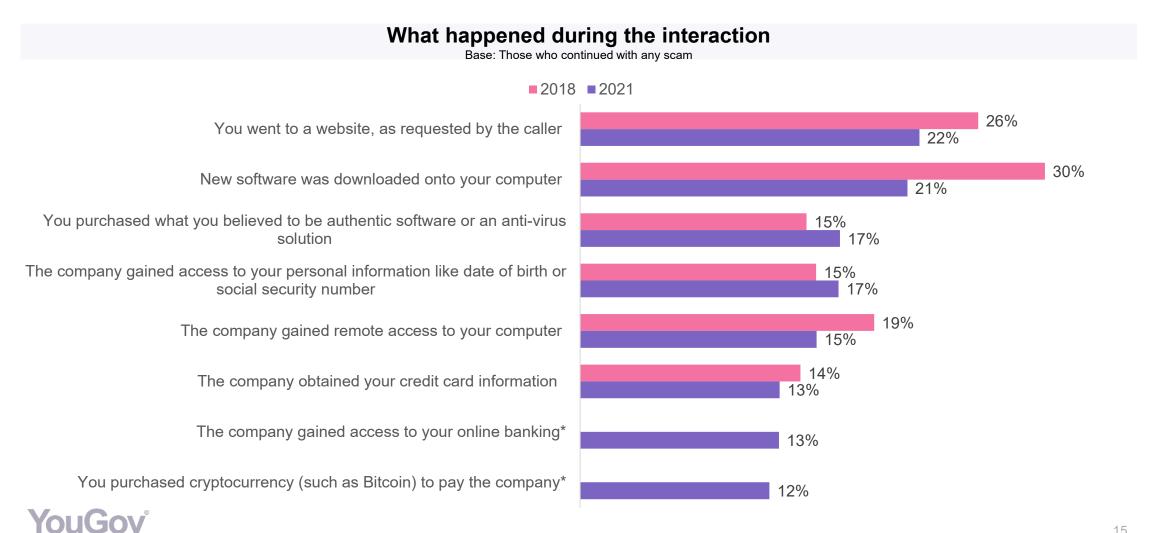
Downloading software and going to a specific website continue to be the most common requests, though to a lesser degree than in 2018



*New option in 2021

Base: Total who continued with any interaction

Consumers continued to fall for the most common requests



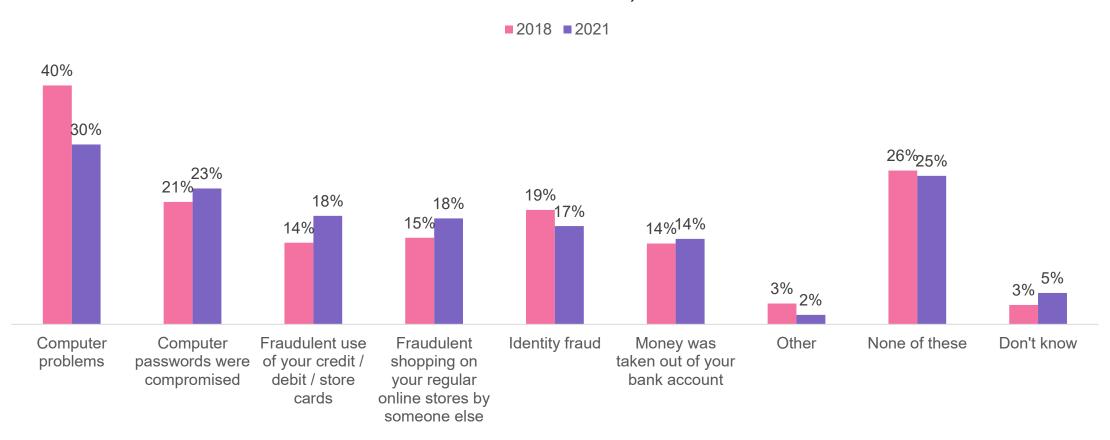
*New options in 2021

Base: Total who continued with any interaction

Tallying with an increase in money being lost, victims were more likely to experience fraudulent use of cards or fraudulent shopping

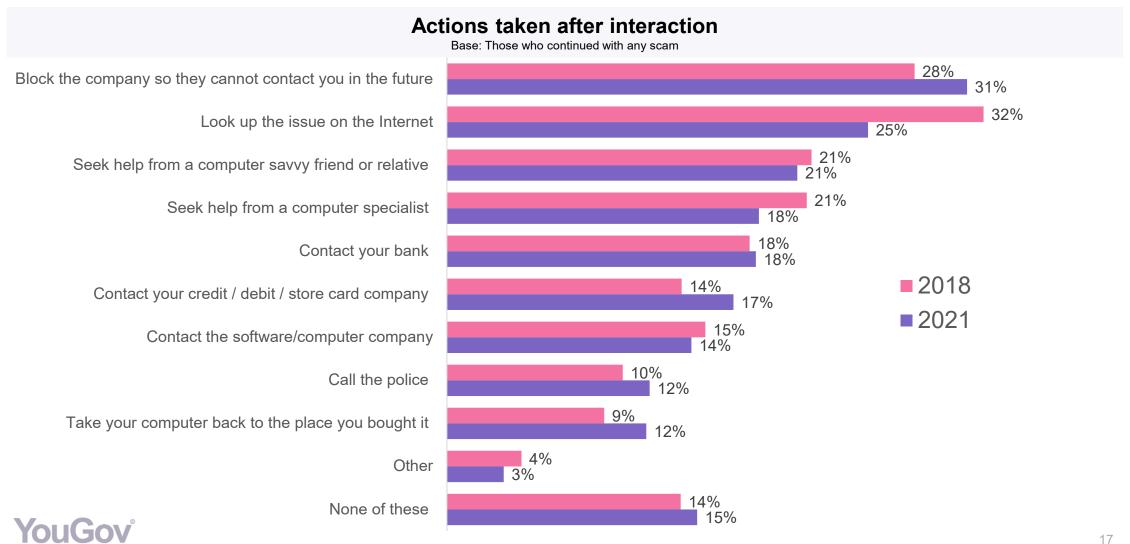
What happened during the interaction

Base: Those who continued with any scam

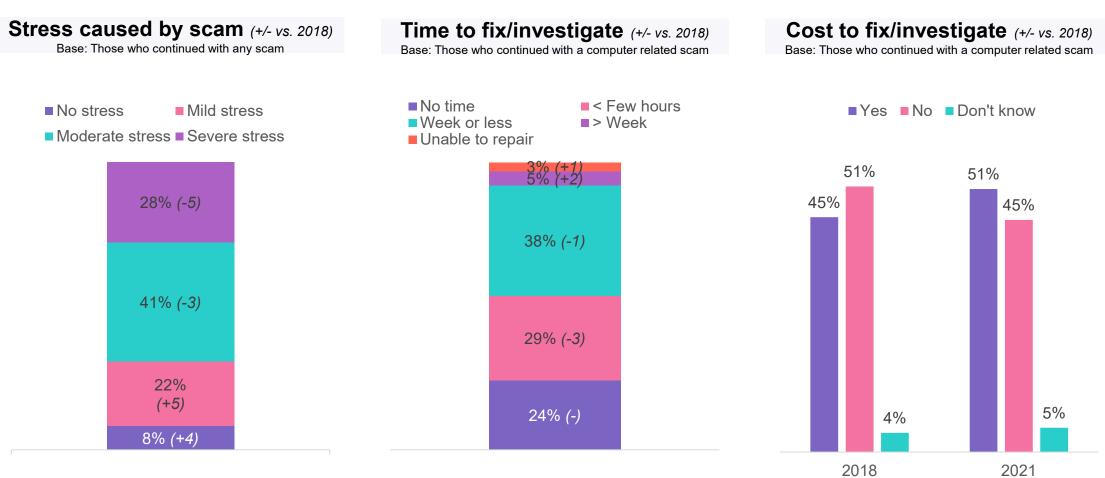




And as a result, more contacted their card provider after the interaction

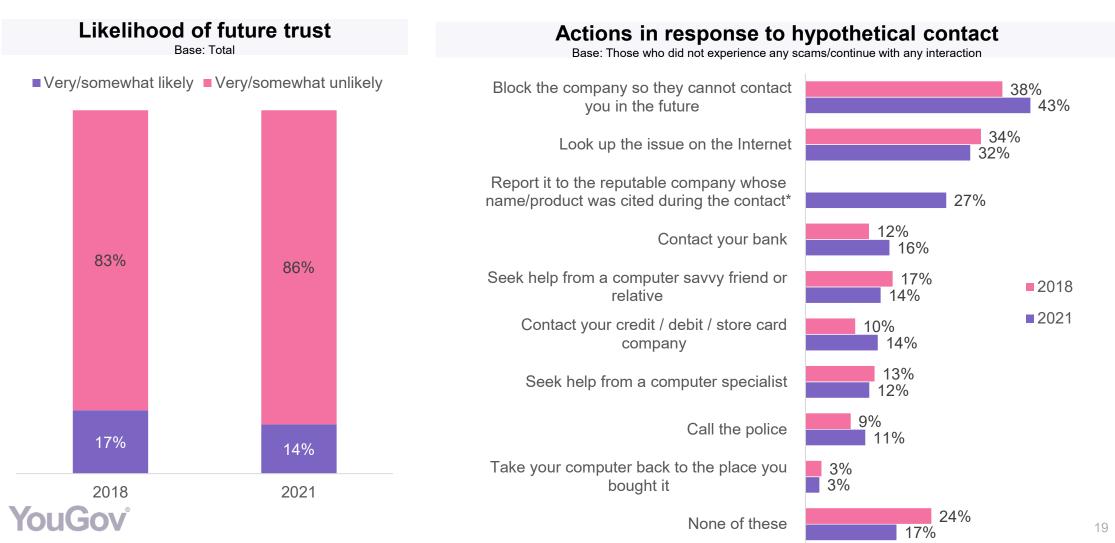


Victims spent time and money on checking and repairing their computers after a scam interaction





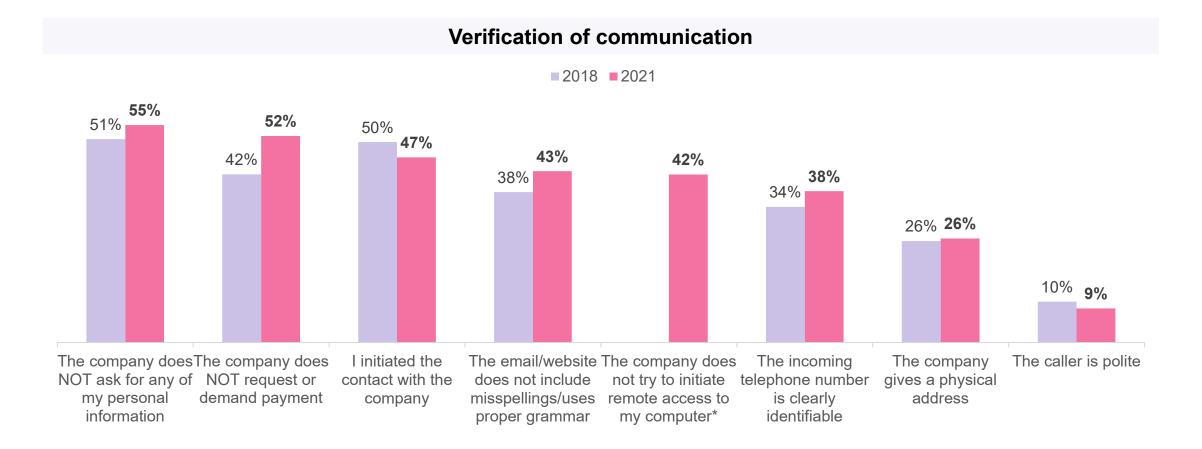
Consumers are increasingly likely to distrust unsolicited contact and take action to protect themselves



*New option in 2021

Q14. In the future, if you were to receive an unsolicited call, pop up, text message, advertising or email from someone claiming to be from a reputable company offering you help, how likely would you be to trust this resource? Q16. In the future, if you received this type of unsolicited contact, which of the following would you do? Please select all that apply.

Consumers fail to recognize the importance of making contact with the company to verify authenticity





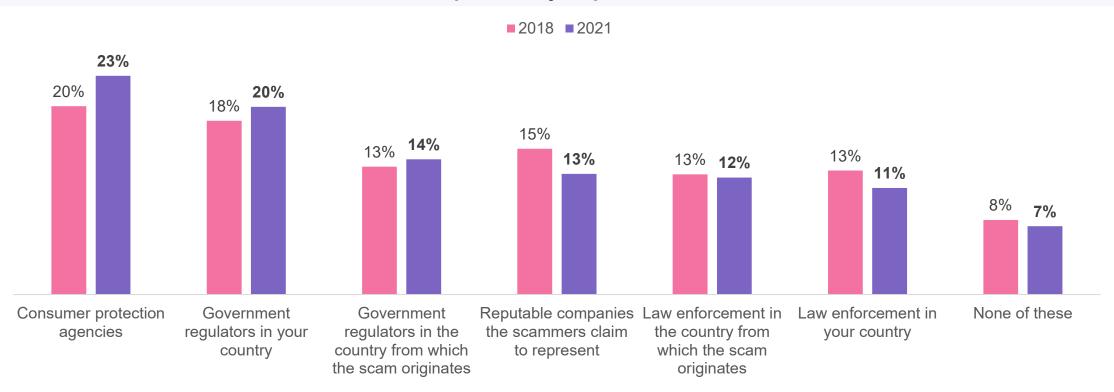
Respondents were unlikely to trust companies and lost trust following scam interactions





Perception of responsibility continues to shift away from the company scammers claim to represent and towards consumer protection agencies

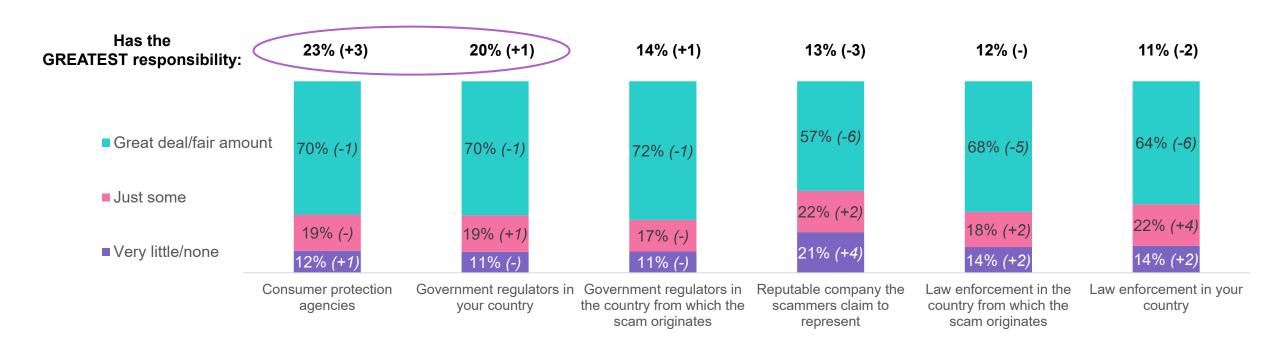
Greatest responsibility to protect consumers





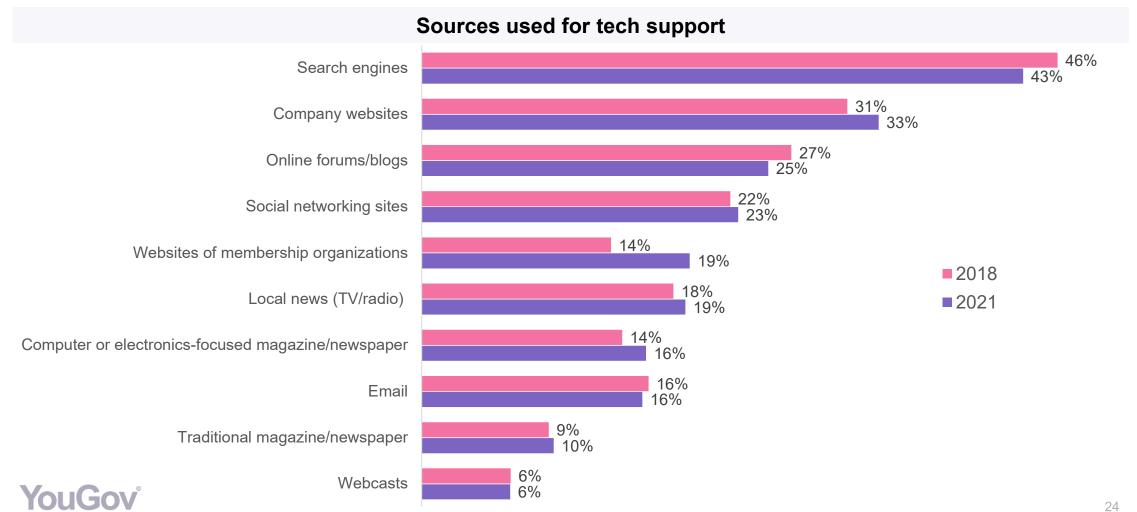
Consumer protection agencies and government regulators are seen to have the biggest responsibility to protect consumers

Responsibility to protect consumers (+/- vs. 2018)



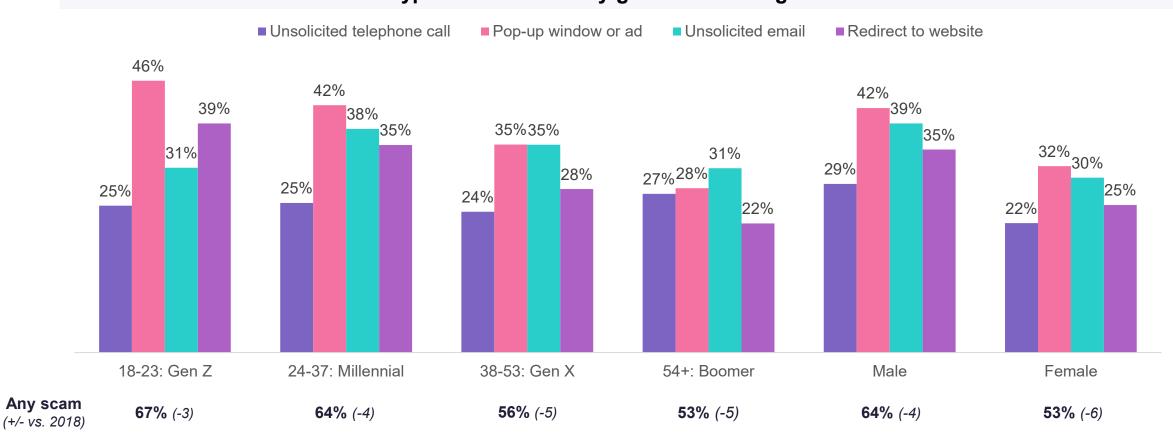


2021 sees more consumers turning to websites of membership organizations for information on tech support scams



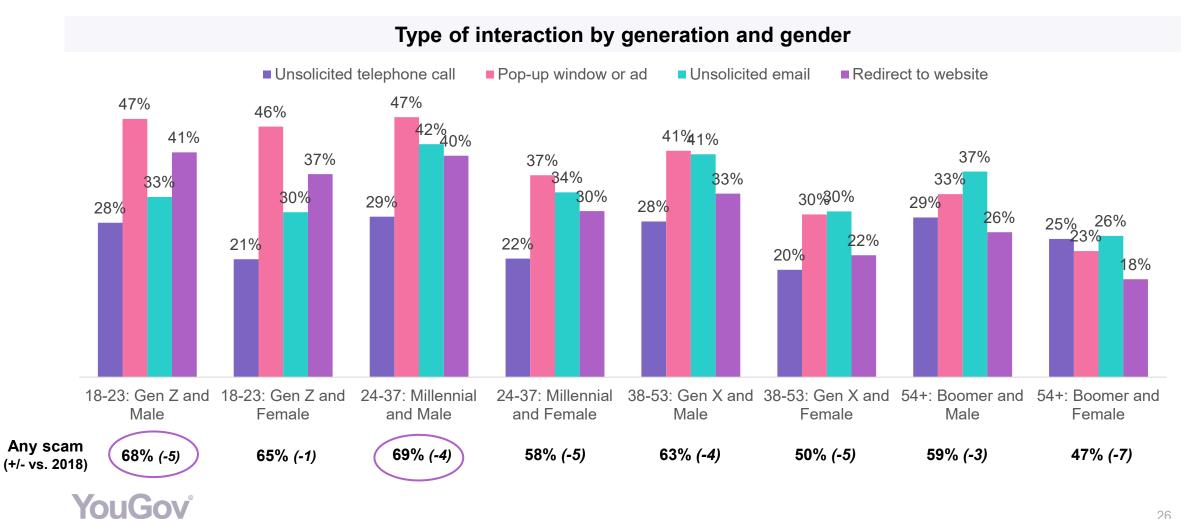
As in 2018, Gen Z, Millennials and Males were most likely to experience a scam interaction, though to a lesser degree than in 2018

Type of interaction by generation and gender





More specifically, Gen Z and Millennial Males experienced more scam interactions





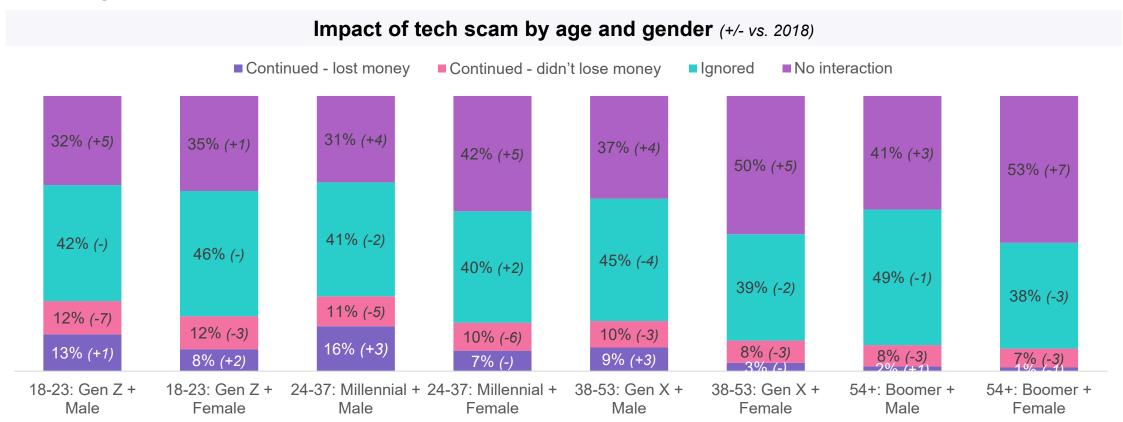
Base: Total

Despite fewer interactions, younger generations and males were more likely to continue and lose money in their interaction

Impact of tech scam by age and gender ■ Continued - lost money ■ Continued - didn't lose money ■ No interaction Ignored 47% 47% 45% 44% 44% 41% 40% 36% 36% 33% 12% 11% 11% 12% 10%10% 9% 9% 4% vs. 2018 18-23: Gen Z 24-37: Millennial 38-53: Gen X 54+: Boomer Male Female

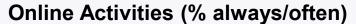


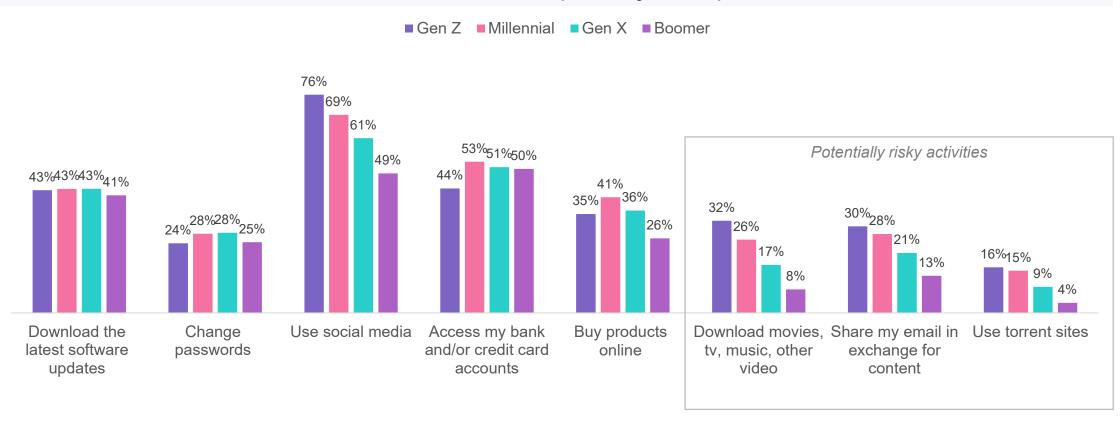
Again, Gen Z and Millennial males were most susceptible to losing money





Gen Z & Millennials continue to engage more in activities associated with scams







Appendix

Pop-up windows and website redirects had the biggest decline across markets. India and Singapore saw large increases in phone scams

Tech support scam incidence by market

	Pop-up	Pop-up	Unsolicited	Unsolicited	Unsolicited	Unsolicited	Redirect to a	Redirect to a
	window or ad	window or ad	telephone call	telephone call	email	email	website	website
	2021	+/- vs 2018	2021	+/- vs 2018	2021	+/- vs 2018	2021	+/- vs 2018
Brazil	53%	2%	16%	0%	37%	-6%	43%	-1%
India	51%	-5%	31%	8%	42%	-3%	48%	-1%
Mexico	49%	-11%	19%	1%	34%	-8%	40%	-13%
Colombia*	46%	NA	16%	NA	32%	NA	37%	NA
Spain*	45%	NA	20%	NA	39%	NA	33%	NA
United States	43%	-7%	37%	-3%	41%	4%	35%	-6%
Singapore	43%	-1%	34%	15%	36%	2%	34%	-3%
Canada	42%	-7%	36%	-1%	41%	2%	34%	-6%
Australia	39%	-4%	46%	2%	41%	1%	34%	-2%
Global	37%	-9%	25%	-2%	34%	-2%	30%	-7%
France	35%	-11%	15%	-2%	35%	1%	27%	-8%
Switzerland	34%	-9%	21%	-5%	26%	-11%	29%	-7%
United Kingdom	25%	-12%	40%	1%	35%	-1%	19%	-13%
Germany	23%	-13%	22%	5%	30%	-5%	19%	-8%
Netherlands*	21%	NA	24%	NA	34%	NA	15%	NA
Finland*	21%	NA	25%	NA	31%	NA	16%	NA
Japan	18%	-12%	5%	-2%	16%	-2%	15%	-5%



In general, most markets either had fewer interactions, or were able to ignore more

Impact of tech support scam by market

	No interaction 2021	No interaction +/- vs. 2018	lgnored 2021	Ignored +/- vs. 2018	Continued, didn't lose money 2021	Continued, didn't lose money +/- vs. 2018	Continued and lost money 2021	Continued and lost money +/- vs. 2018
India	31%	1%	21%	-9%	17%	-9%	31%	18%
United States	33%	0%	49%	0%	8%	-4%	10%	4%
Mexico	35%	9%	42%	-4%	14%	-6%	9%	1%
Australia	32%	3%	49%	-3%	10%	-2%	9%	3%
Brazil	30%	-3%	40%	-2%	22%	3%	7%	2%
Global	41%	5%	42%	-1%	9%	-4%	7%	1%
Canada	35%	3%	49%	-1%	10%	-5%	6%	3%
Colombia*	37%	NA	45%	NA	12%	NA	6%	NA
Spain*	35%	NA	52%	NA	8%	NA	6%	NA
Netherlands*	48%	NA	41%	NA	5%	NA	6%	NA
Singapore	38%	-4%	49%	5%	9%	-2%	5%	1%
France	46%	7%	42%	-3%	7%	-4%	5%	1%
Germany	53%	7%	38%	-3%	6%	-4%	4%	-1%
Switzerland	47%	9%	44%	3%	6%	-6%	4%	-6%
Japan	71%	7%	24%	-5%	1%	-3%	3%	1%
Finland*	50%	NA	38%	NA	9%	NA	3%	NA
United Kingdom	40%	3%	52%	6%	7%	-4%	1%	-5%

^{*} New markets in 2021 Base: Total Note: Country percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Q1a. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following in the last year or so (January 2020 to present). Q2. For each of the interactions you experienced, please indicate which actions you took. If you experienced more than one interaction of each type, think of the most recent one you can recall. Q8. As a result of this most recent interaction, have you lost any money? If so, how much?

Respondents continue to rely on the Internet for advice Those in South America are more likely to seek expert help from friends or computer specialists

Hypothetical future actions taken Base: Those who did not experience any interactions/ did not continue with any interaction **ALL** ΑU BR CO DE MX NL SG ES CH UK US CA Block the company so they cannot contact you 49% 44% 43% 39% 44% 37% 39% 50% 46% 40% 26% 41% 44% 45% 54% 47% 42% in the future 32% 29% 29% 25% 30% 25% 28% 40% 32% 44% 29% 29% 33% 33% 35% 30% Look up the issue on the Internet Report it to the reputable company whose 29% 29% 33% 24% 21% 32% 37% 11% 22% 33% 33% 20% 30% 30% 28% name/product was cited during the contact 16% 26% 15% 13% 15% 7% 22% 30% 19% 18% Contact your bank 13% 11% Seek help from a computer savvy friend or 14% 11% 24% 9% 15% 16% 22% 12% 18% 13% 12% 24% 13% 15% 16% 10% relative Contact your credit / debit / store card 21% 14% 9% 19% 17% 26% 13% 7% 7% 9% 23% 14% 11% 13% 9% 12% company Seek help from a computer specialist 12% 7% 33% 33% 9% 11% 6% 23% 5% 24% 6% 9% 17% 11% 2% 7% Call the police 11% 5% 9% 9% 14% 6% 26% 17% 14% 8% 13% 10% 15% 20% 3% 4% Take your computer back to the place you 3% 1% 6% 1% 11% 1% 1% 6% 1% 6% 2% 3% 0% 2% bought it 17% 17% 16% None of these 22% 8% 26% 9% 24% 14% 26% 10% 14% 18% 14% 25%



Government regulators and consumer protection agencies are generally viewed as having responsibility to protect consumers

Greatest responsibility to protect consumers																	
	ALL	AU	BR	CA	со	FI	FR	DE	IN	JP	MX	NL	SG	ES	СН	UK	US
Consumer protection agencies	23%	25%	39%	24%	42%	19%	17%	19%	19%	15%	31%	12%	13%	22%	21%	21%	27%
Government regulators in your country	20%	26%	12%	22%	13%	8%	24%	23%	23%	9%	18%	20%	29%	24%	19%	25%	20%
Government regulators in the country from which the scam originates	14%	17%	10%	13%	10%	8%	14%	13%	19%	13%	14%	11%	18%	18%	14%	20%	15%
Reputable companies the scammers claim to represent	13%	12%	15%	11%	20%	7%	15%	5%	13%	16%	18%	10%	15%	12%	9%	11%	13%
Law enforcement in the country from which the scam originates	12%	9%	10%	12%	6%	24%	11%	15%	11%	15%	8%	16%	9%	11%	17%	12%	11%
Law enforcement in your country	11%	6%	9%	9%	6%	26%	12%	17%	7%	13%	6%	23%	9%	9%	14%	5%	8%
None of these	7%	5%	5%	9%	3%	7%	7%	9%	8%	19%	5%	8%	7%	4%	6%	6%	6%



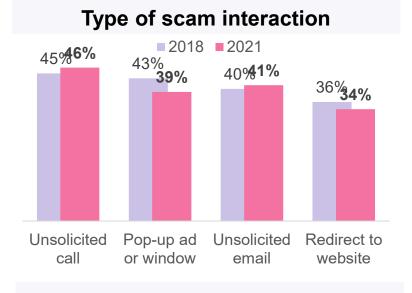
Search engines and company websites are top resources for tech support scams information

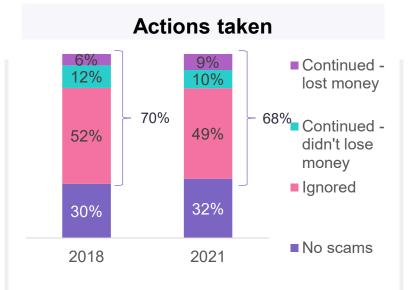
Sources used for tech support																	
	All	AU	BR	CA	co	FI	FR	DE	IN	JP	MX	NL	SG	ES	СН	UK	US
Search engines	43%	46%	39%	39%	30%	50%	49%	47%	38%	43%	36%	44%	47%	43%	46%	53%	43%
Company websites	33%	31%	44%	28%	48%	35%	17%	33%	37%	21%	46%	20%	37%	30%	32%	31%	37%
Online forums/blogs	25%	24%	23%	21%	22%	24%	29%	25%	33%	6%	24%	23%	32%	32%	28%	27%	26%
Social networking sites (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter)	23%	21%	29%	21%	33%	20%	18%	15%	40%	14%	31%	17%	29%	23%	24%	16%	16%
Websites of membership organizations (such as AARP)	19%	15%	29%	15%	48%	14%	17%	13%	27%	4%	25%	37%	14%	10%	15%	9%	19%
Local news (TV/radio)	19%	18%	23%	20%	25%	18%	12%	23%	21%	21%	20%	13%	22%	20%	21%	10%	18%
Computer or electronics -focused magazine/newspaper	16%	10%	21%	11%	25%	15%	10%	21%	30%	10%	21%	10%	15%	19%	17%	8%	15%
Email	16%	17%	20%	15%	24%	13%	10%	14%	31%	10%	19%	12%	18%	12%	16%	6%	16%
Traditional magazine/newspaper	10%	8%	14%	6%	12%	11%	6%	10%	15%	10%	9%	5%	10%	9%	11%	5%	9%
Webcasts	6%	4%	6%	5%	8%	6%	12%	2%	14%	6%	8%	4%	8%	4%	8%	1%	6%
Others	3%	4%	3%	4%	1%	4%	3%	2%	0%	1%	1%	4%	1%	3%	4%	5%	4%
None of these	13%	16%	6%	19%	4%	12%	16%	15%	7%	26%	6%	14%	11%	10%	12%	19%	15%

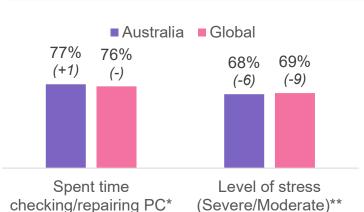


Country snapshots

Country snapshot: Australia





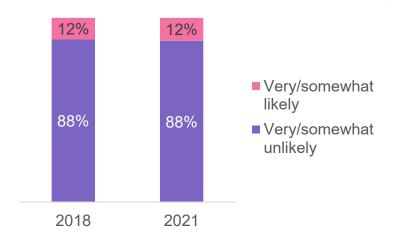


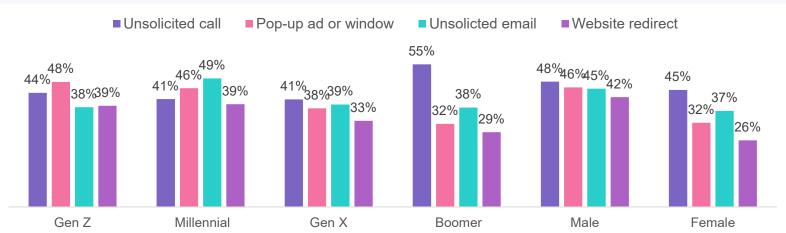
Non-monetary impact (+/- vs. 2018)

* Base: Those who continued with computer related scam

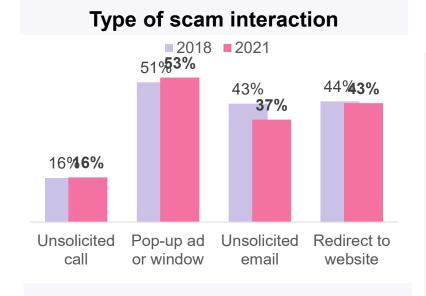
** Base: Those who continued with any scam interaction

Likely to trust unsolicited contact

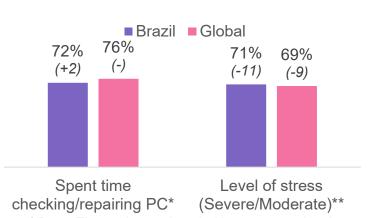




Country snapshot: Brazil

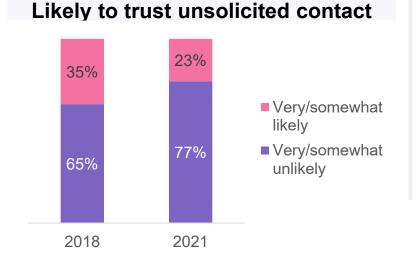


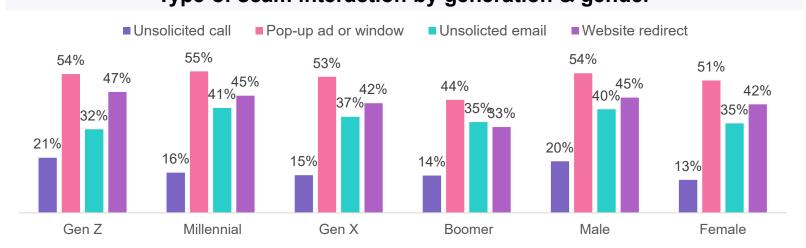
Actions taken 5% Continued -19% lost money 22% 70% Continued -67% 43% 40% didn't lose monev Ignored 33% 30% ■ No scams 2018 2021



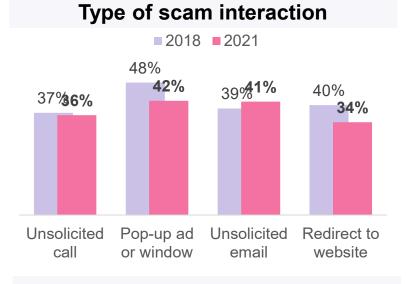
Non-monetary impact (+/- vs. 2018)

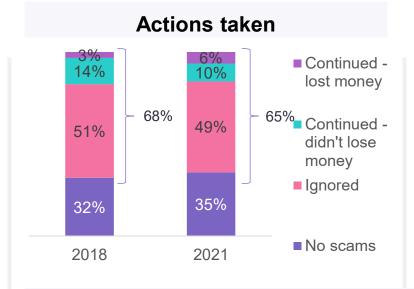
* Base: Those who continued with computer related scam
** Base: Those who continued with any scam interaction

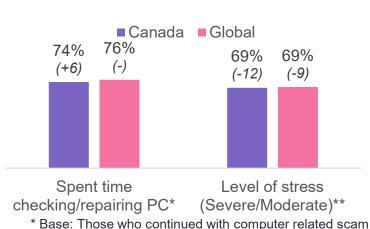




Country snapshot: Canada



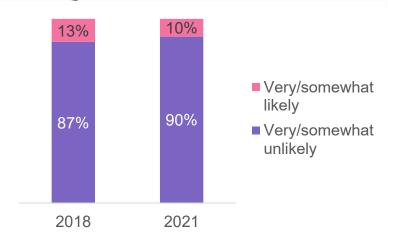


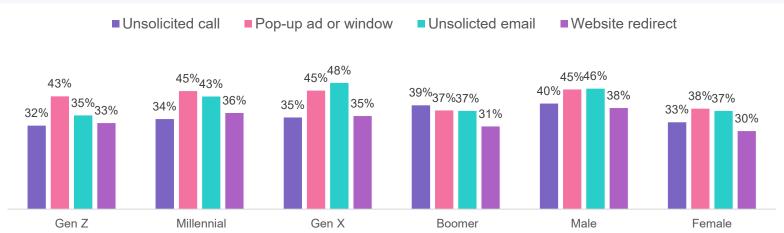


Non-monetary impact (+/- vs. 2018)

** Base: Those who continued with any scam interaction

Likely to trust unsolicited contact

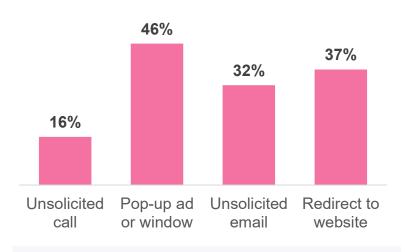




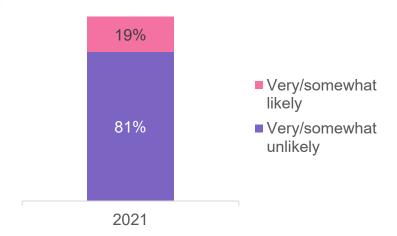
^{*} Base: Those who continued with computer related scam

Country snapshot: Colombia

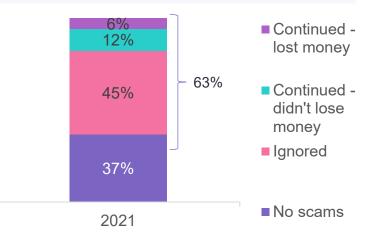
Type of scam interaction



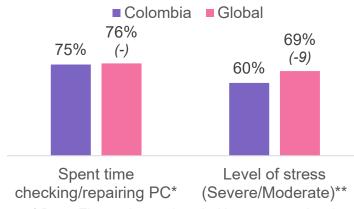
Likely to trust unsolicited contact



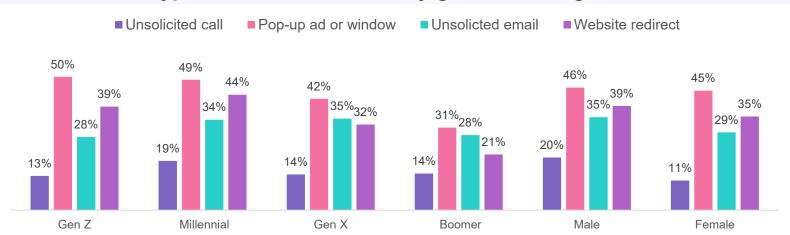
Actions taken



Non-monetary impact (+/- vs. 2018)



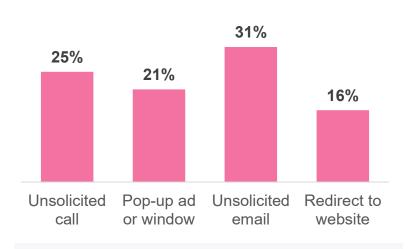
* Base: Those who continued with computer related scam



^{**} Base: Those who continued with any scam interaction

Country snapshot: Finland

Type of scam interaction

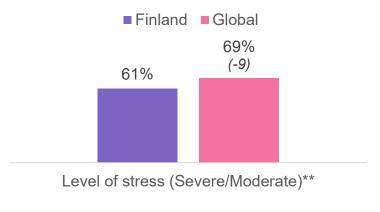


lost money 50% 38% Continued didn't lose money Ignored 50%

2021

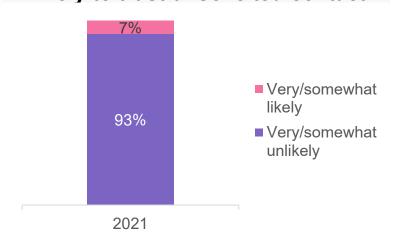
Actions taken

Non-monetary impact (+/- vs. 2018)



** Base: Those who continued with any scam interaction

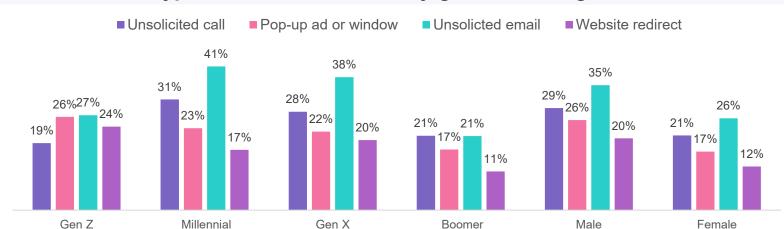
Likely to trust unsolicited contact



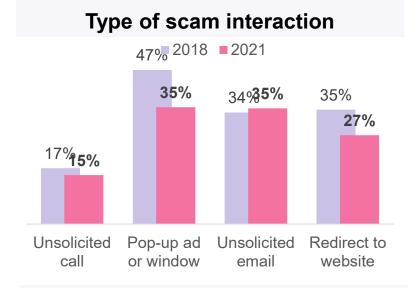
Type of scam interaction by generation & gender

Continued -

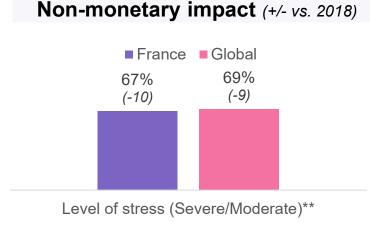
■ No scams



Country snapshot: France

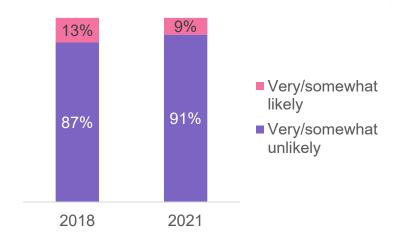


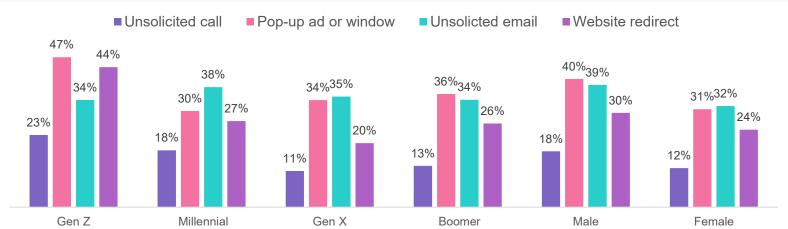
Actions taken Continued -11% lost money 54% 61% 42% 45% Continued didn't lose money Ignored 46% 39% ■ No scams 2018 2021



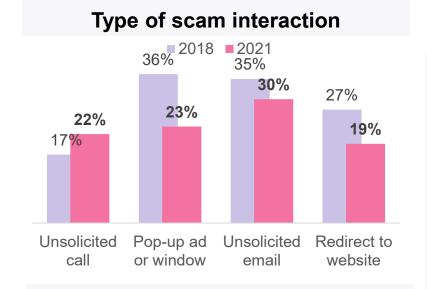
^{**} Base: Those who continued with any scam interaction

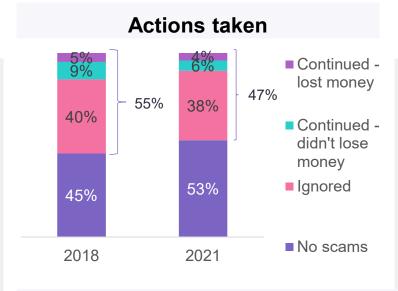
Likely to trust unsolicited contact





Country snapshot: Germany



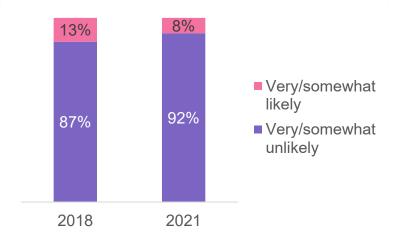


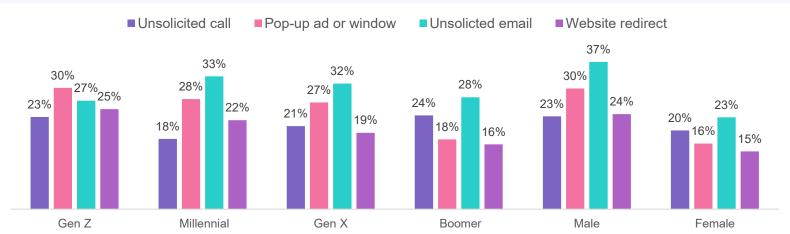




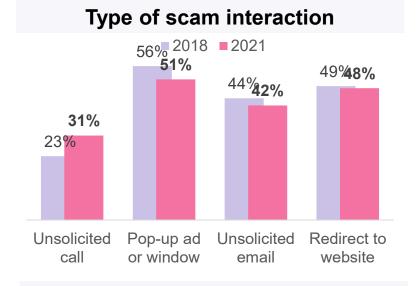
^{**} Base: Those who continued with any scam interaction

Likely to trust unsolicited contact

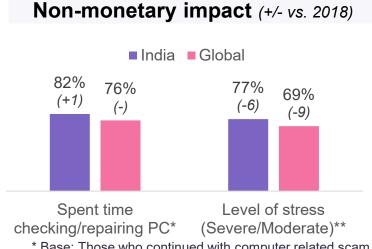




Country snapshot: India

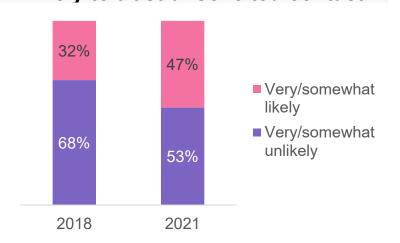


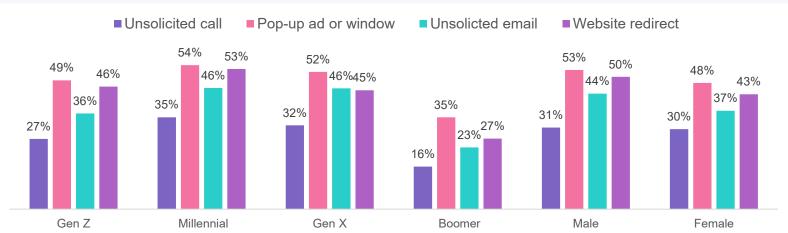
Actions taken Continued -14% 31% lost money 26% 70% Continued didn't lose 30% 21% money Ignored 30% 31% ■ No scams 2018 2021



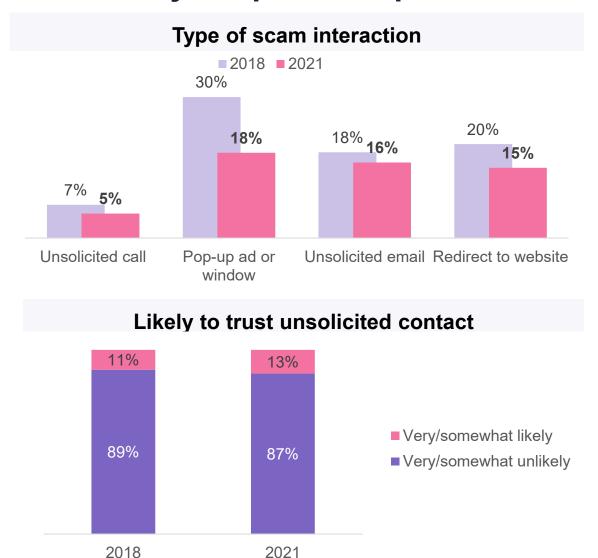
* Base: Those who continued with computer related scam ** Base: Those who continued with any scam interaction

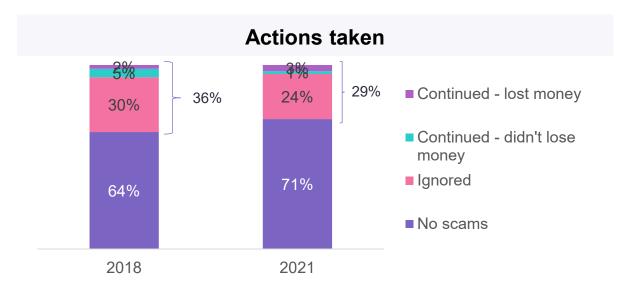
Likely to trust unsolicited contact

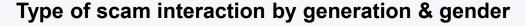


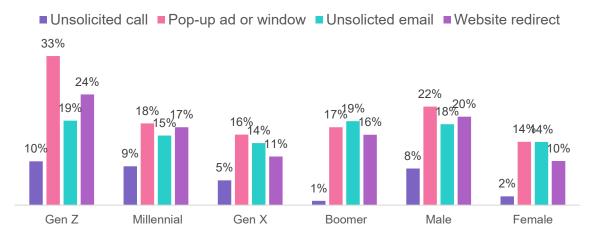


Country snapshot: Japan

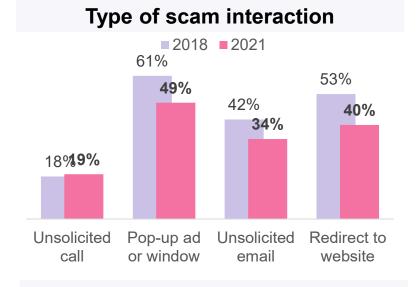




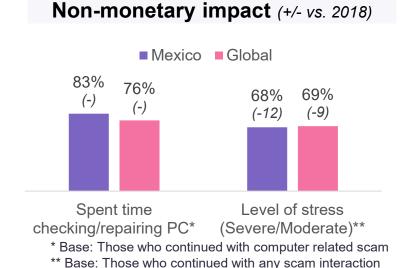




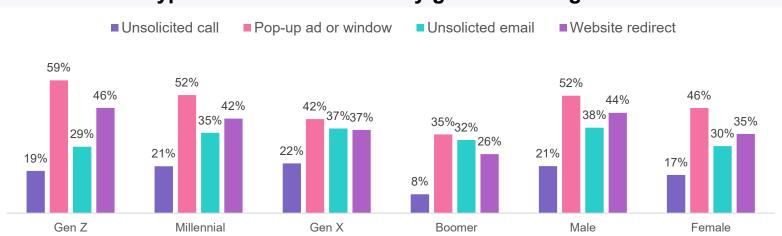
Country snapshot: Mexico



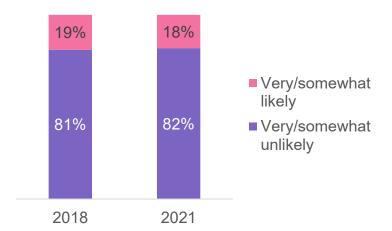
Actions taken 8% 9% Continued -14% lost money 20% 74% 65% Continued -42% didn't lose 46% money Ignored 35% 26% ■ No scams 2018 2021



Type of scam interaction by generation & gender



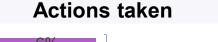
Likely to trust unsolicited contact

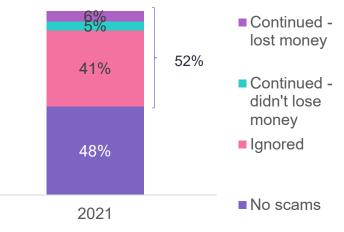


Country snapshot: Netherlands

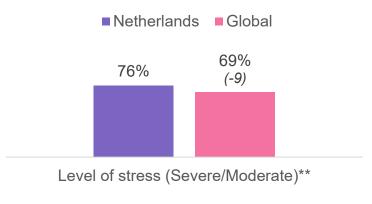
Type of scam interaction 34% 24% 21% 15%





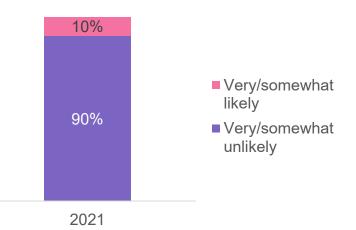


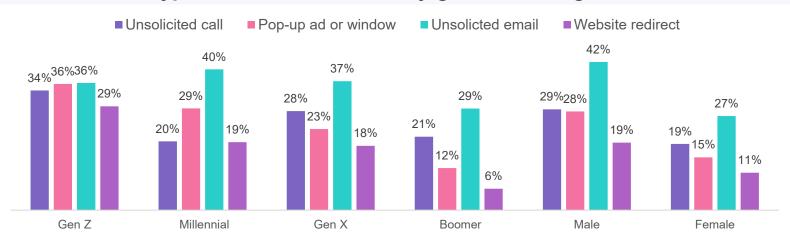
Non-monetary impact (+/- vs. 2018)



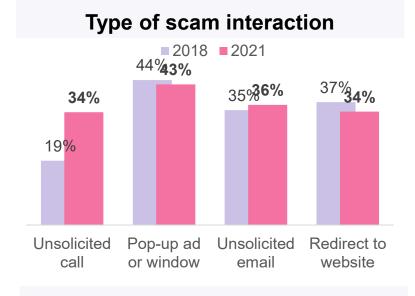
** Base: Those who continued with any scam interaction

Likely to trust unsolicited contact

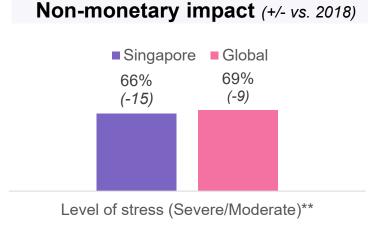




Country snapshot: Singapore

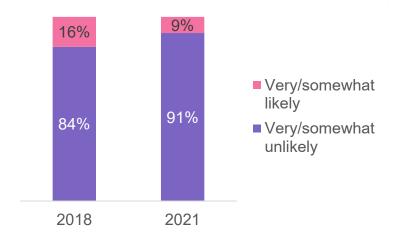


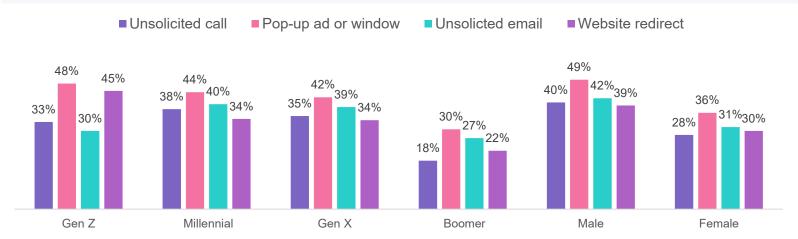
Actions taken 4% Continued -11% lost money 62% 58% 43% 49% Continued didn't lose money Ignored 42% 38% ■ No scams 2018 2021



** Base: Those who continued with any scam interaction

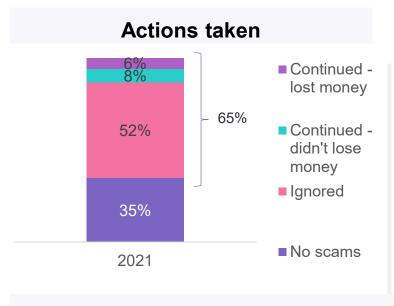
Likely to trust unsolicited contact

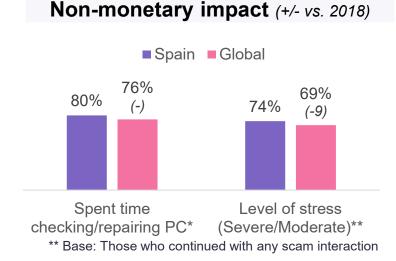


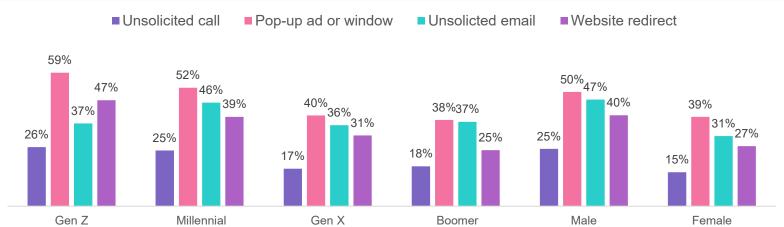


Country snapshot: Spain

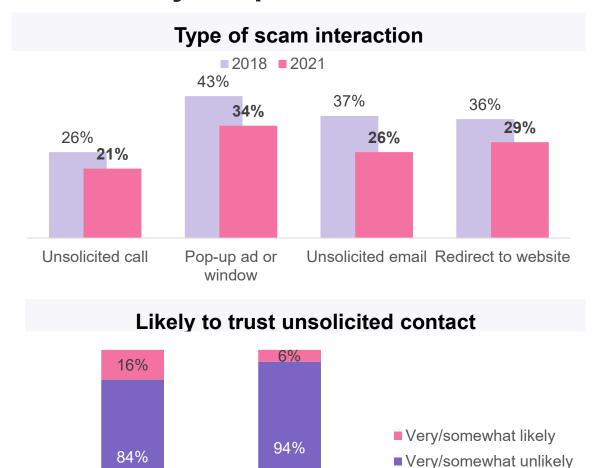




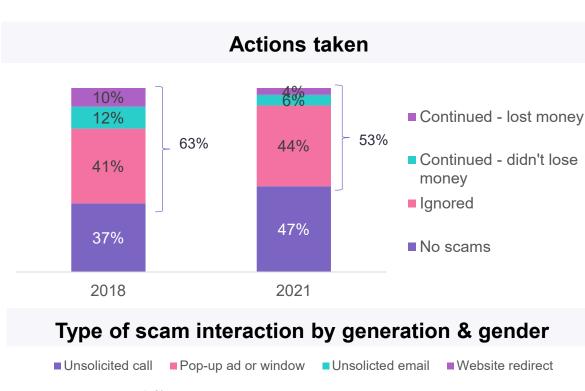


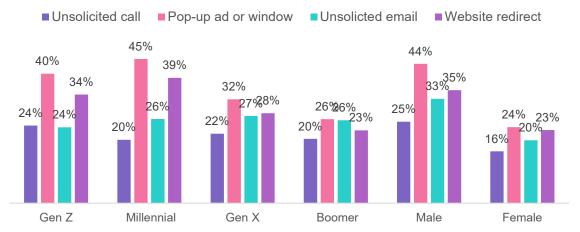


Country snapshot: Switzerland



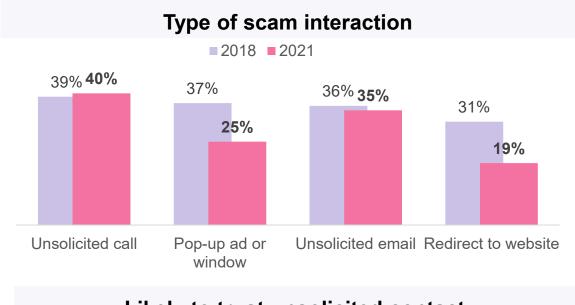
2021



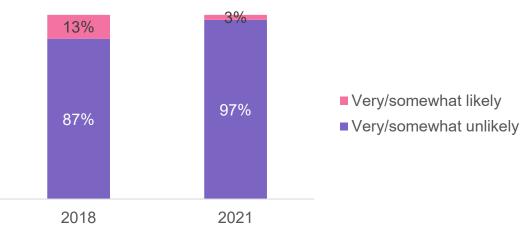


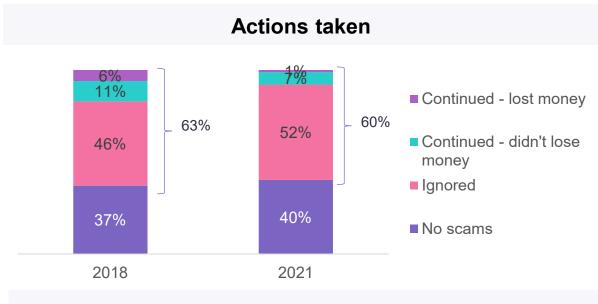
2018

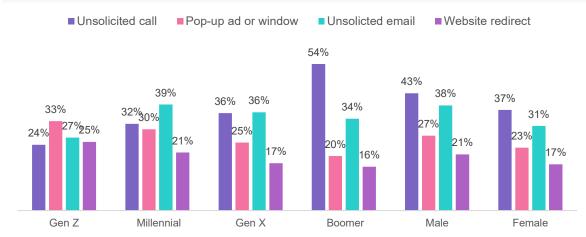
Country snapshot: UK



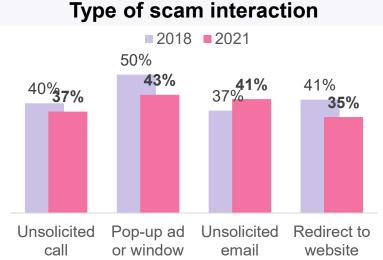
Likely to trust unsolicited contact



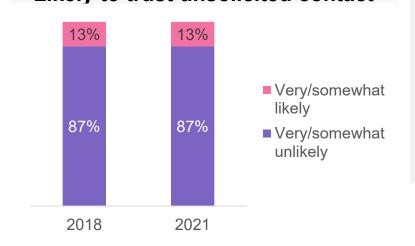


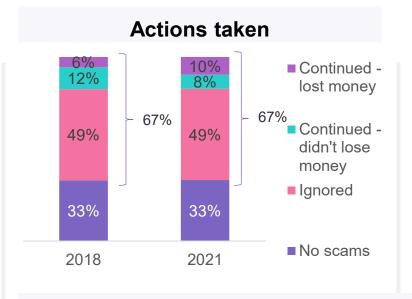


Country snapshot: USA

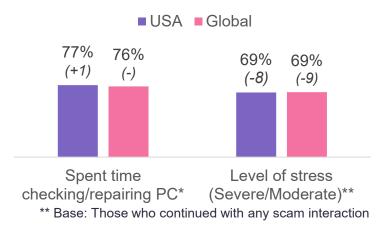


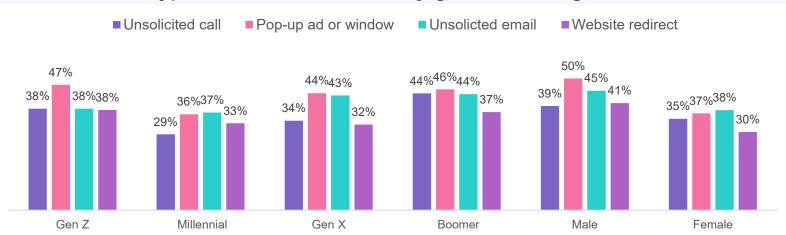
Likely to trust unsolicited contact





Non-monetary impact (+/- vs. 2018)





Thank you.

Please reach out to Microsoft or YouGov for more information

Best panel.
Best data.
Best tools.

YouGov