

Privacy or Convenience?

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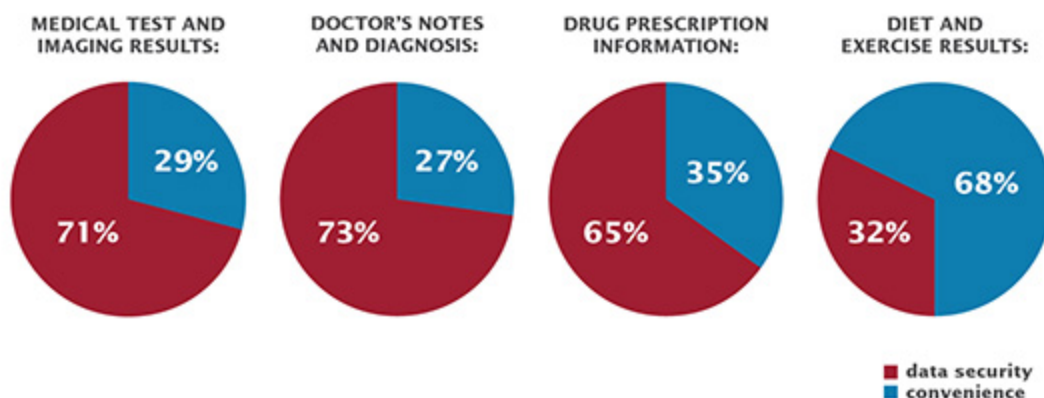
The tension between data privacy and consumers' demand for their health information will become more strained in 2015, a new report predicts. As the number of privacy breaches in the healthcare sector has grown in recent years, so too has the desire of consumers to be one click away from their personal health information, according to a report published by PricewaterhouseCoopers' Health Research Institute (HRI).

For the time being, consumers value privacy over convenience. In the November 2014 HRI survey titled "Top Health Industry Issues of 2015," 65 percent of respondents said data security trumped convenient access to imaging and test results, doctors' notes, diagnoses, and prescriptions. The only scenario in which this wasn't the case was with an individual's Fitness information.

However, consumers have good reason to worry about the safety of their health information. One person's record can be worth up to \$1,300 on the black market. And in the summer of 2014 alone, more than five million consumers had information that was compromised, according to HRI.

Hackers and cyber criminals are upping the ante, too. For example, at the Clay County Hospital in the small rural community of Flora, IL, hospital officials received an e-mail saying that unless a "substantial payment" was made, cyber criminals would leak patient records onto the Internet. The e-mail was received in November 2014. While the theft of health information is common, reports of ransom are rare, and it's difficult to know if rates of it are increasing, *Modern Healthcare* reported.

"What is more important to you, data security or convenience in the following instances?"

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