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Abstract:

Internet usage continues to grow globally and as part of this, the take-up of personal cloud data storage solutions has also been increasing. This has been assisted by the continued rise in internet access speeds as well as an increase in the numbers of vendors and the resulting completion between them. These services can be very attractive to the end user; it becomes possible to access your data from multiple locations, on various devices and easily share data and collaborate with others.

This research aims to explore the usage of these cloud data storage solutions along with the perceived security and privacy risks that are associated with using them. Are users of these solutions aware of these risks and are they taking necessary steps to protect themselves against them? The location of where the data is stored is an important factor in this situation as there may be contrasting privacy laws between different countries.

Semi-structured interviews and observation sessions were used to gather data from a group of 18 participants. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyse the data from these sessions.

The findings outlined a number of key points. There was a significant uptake of cloud data storage solutions amongst the group of participants with many having multiple accounts with different providers, although only one participant paid for a cloud data service. A minority were unaware of the potential risks with the technology. However, it was discovered that in general, the majority did not care about these risks but still used the technologies nonetheless, although most chose not to store sensitive or confidential data with their cloud data storage provider.