# The Google/TechTarget *Behavioural* Research Project: Phase 2

## Search Behaviour of IT Buyers Online During the Purchase Process

***Gain Insights to Make Smarter Media and Content Choices***



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# Google Behavioural Research Study Summary

This study is a continuation of the 2008 Google/TechTarget Research Project. In the 2008 study, our main intent was to map our IT Research Panel's search habits as they related to specific keyword phrases across buying stages. In that study we relied on a question and answer format. The study revealed that indeed IT buyers associate specific keyword queries with where they are in their buying cycle.

In this study, we partnered with global research provider OTX to track IT buyer behaviour. Our goal here was to see if, when presented with actual SERP (search engine rendered pages), the IT buyers specific search behaviour, as indicated by what they actually did on these pages, would deviate from the first study. In effect, we tracked the differences between what buyers said they would do versus what they actually did when presented with simulated search environments. Based on these behavioural study responses it becomes obvious that the actual behaviour closely resembles findings from the first study. However there were some notable differences especially between the three roles, CIOs, directors and administrators.

- CIOs in this study used keyword queries around "solution" more in later stage as compared to other titles and had the tendency to dig deeper within search results (more pages) than their team counterparts.
- And interestingly enough, when it comes to willingness to register, CIOs and directors are more receptive to providing telephone numbers than their counterparts.
- Media types clearly influence search choices, second to title and topics.
- Click maps reveal significantly more users skim the entire search page for results as compared to last study.
- Analysis of what type of content listings appeal to users based on stage reinforces that awareness content is most appealing in early stage and same with consideration content for mid stage, but deviation occurs in decision stage where consideration and decision type content are equally searched.

## Behavioural Study Objectives

- Refresh the 2008 search study and look for year-to-year trends among IT buyers
- Re-examine relationship of search usage by buying stage
- Identify distinctions between self-reported and behavioural methodology
- Look for noteworthy differences by title and region
- Provide fresh insights to marketers for search, lead generation and branding

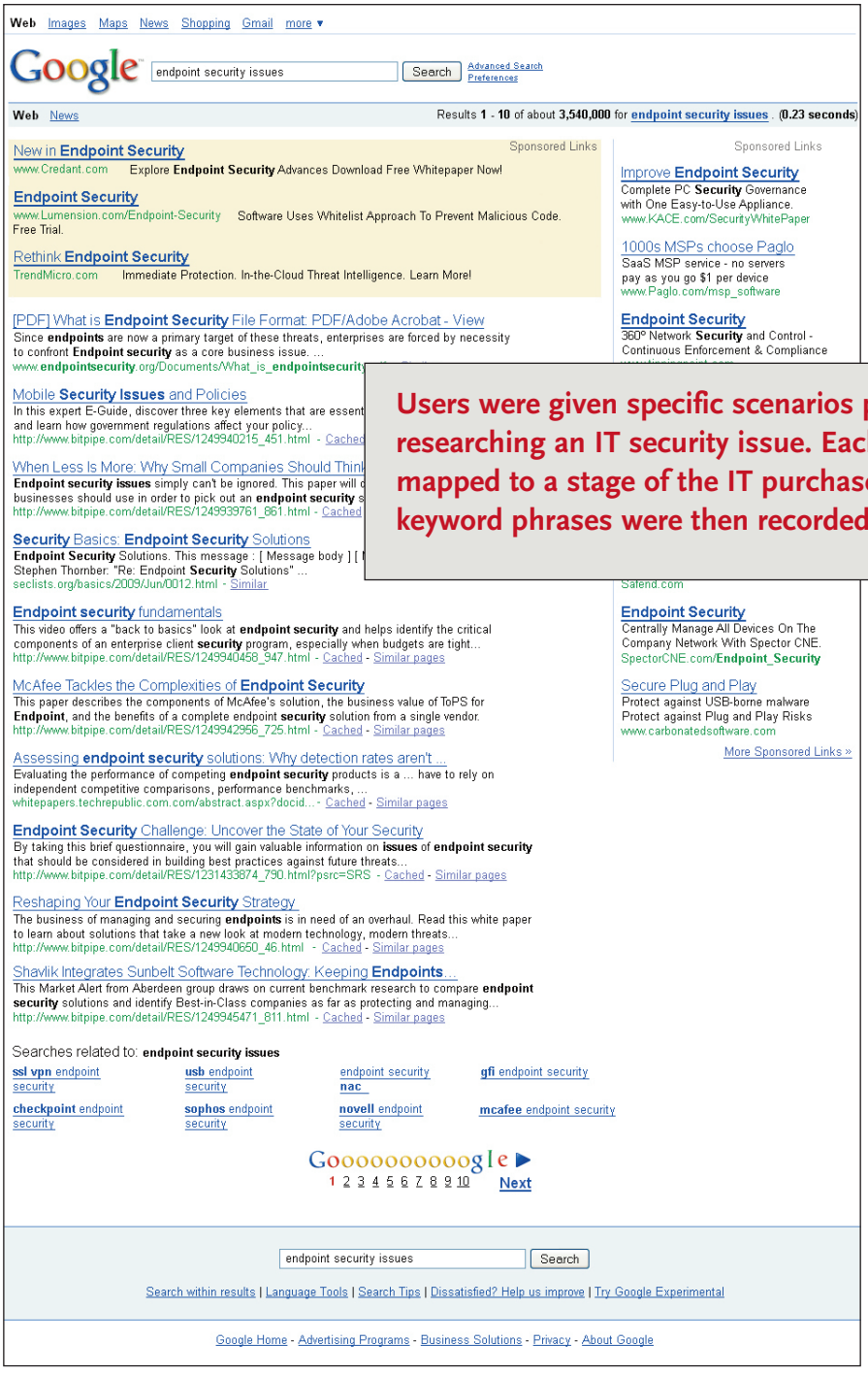
## Methodology

- Online survey fielded September 2009
- Online behavioural research done by independent marketing research firm OTX
- Search scenarios within the buying cycle
- Search terms captured
- Search engine result page behaviours captured
- Additional self-reported responses
- Opportunity for contrast with 2008 study

## Demographics

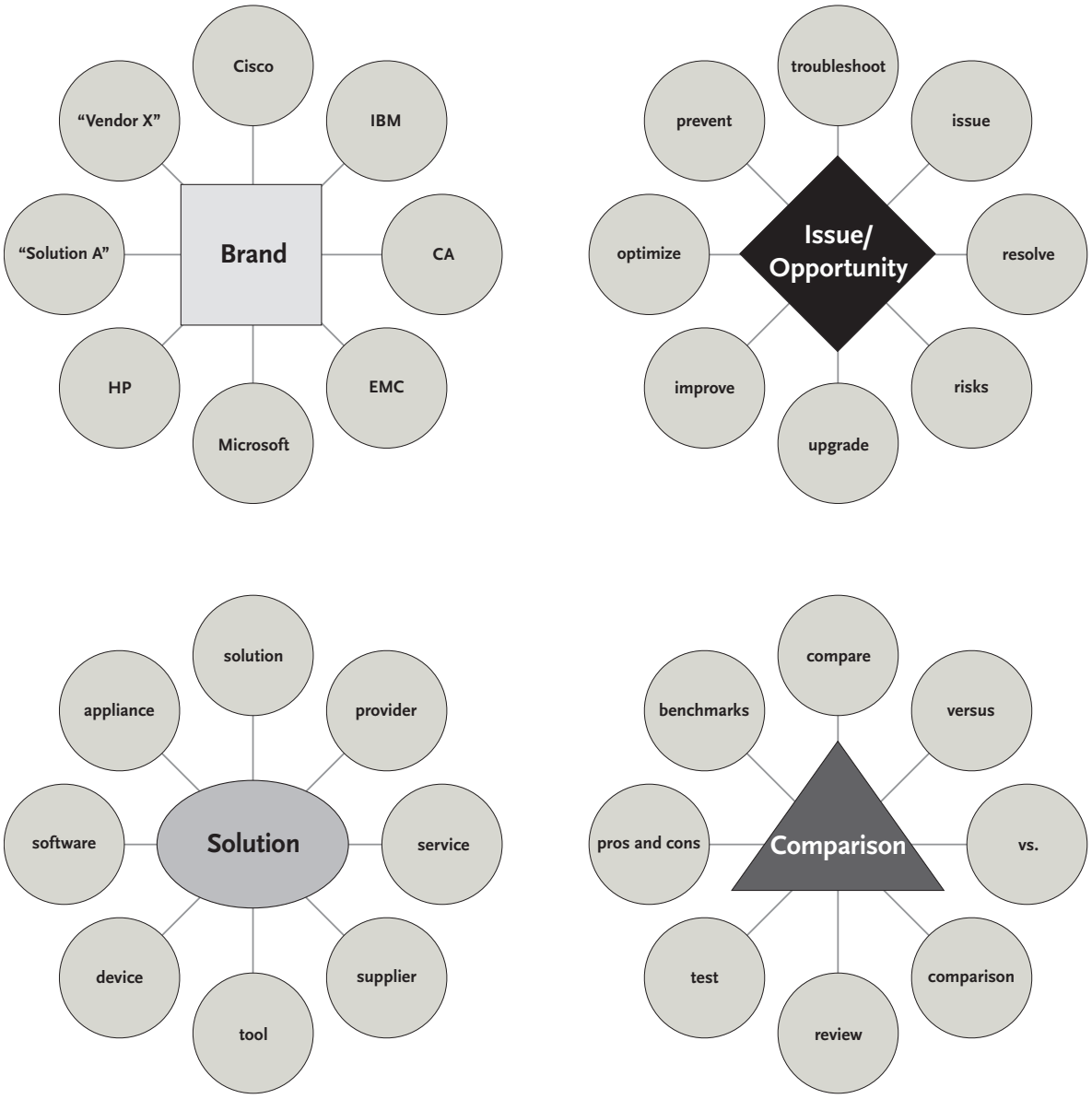
- 350 UK respondents
- Opt-in IT Research Panel
- Mix of job titles
  - CIO (11%)
  - IT Directors (31%)
  - IT Administrators (58%)
- Wide range of company sizes and budgets

# Keyword Analysis



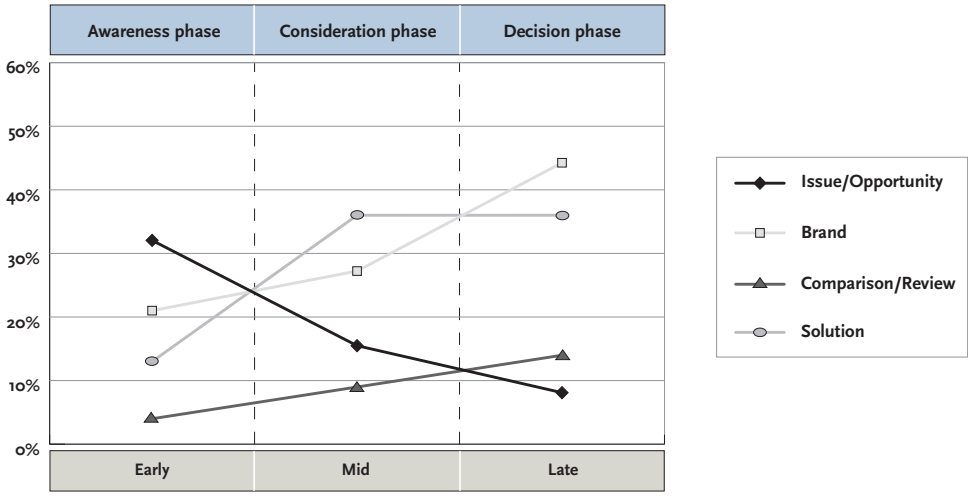

**Users were given specific scenarios pertaining to researching an IT security issue. Each scenario was mapped to a stage of the IT purchase process. All keyword phrases were then recorded and analyzed.**

## The search queries were then clustered into four groups: Brand, Issue/Opportunity, Solution, and Comparison



## UK Keywords Used by Buying Stage

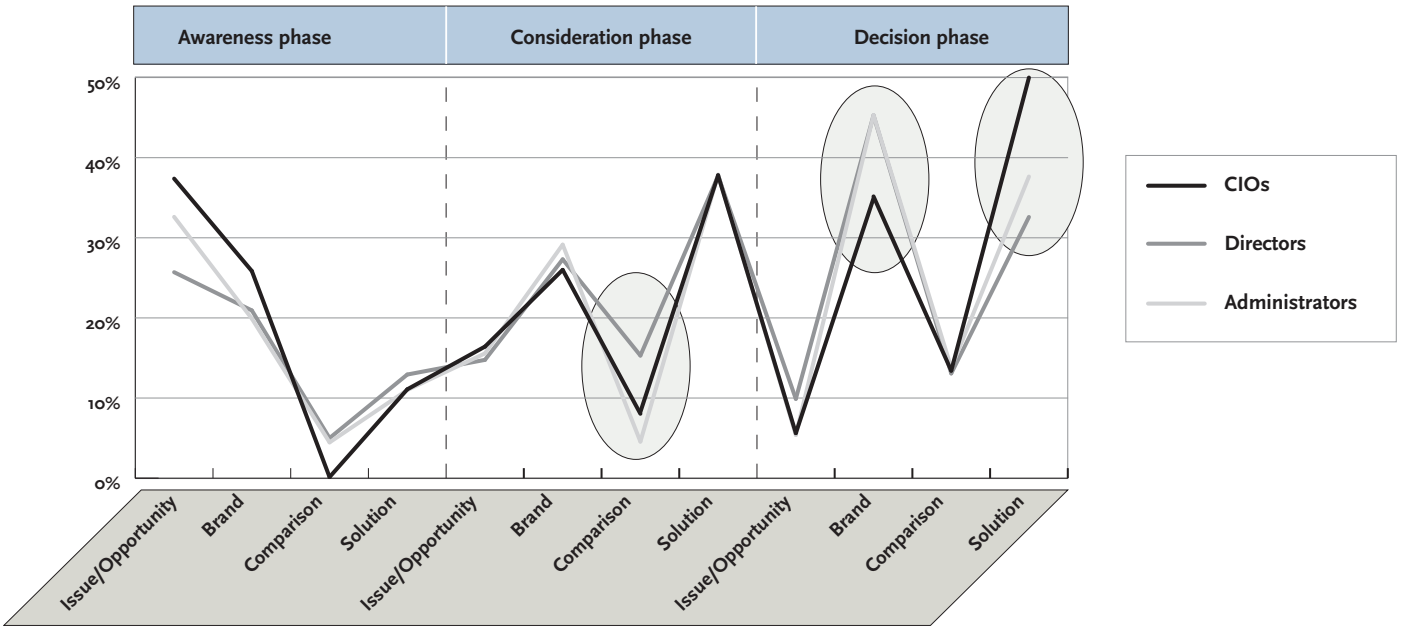
***Issue/Opportunity phrases were used more in the awareness phase, and were used less frequently towards the later stages. Brand and Comparison/Review phrases were used more towards the decision phase of the IT buying process. Solution phrases were used more during the consideration phase.***



## UK Keywords Used by Title

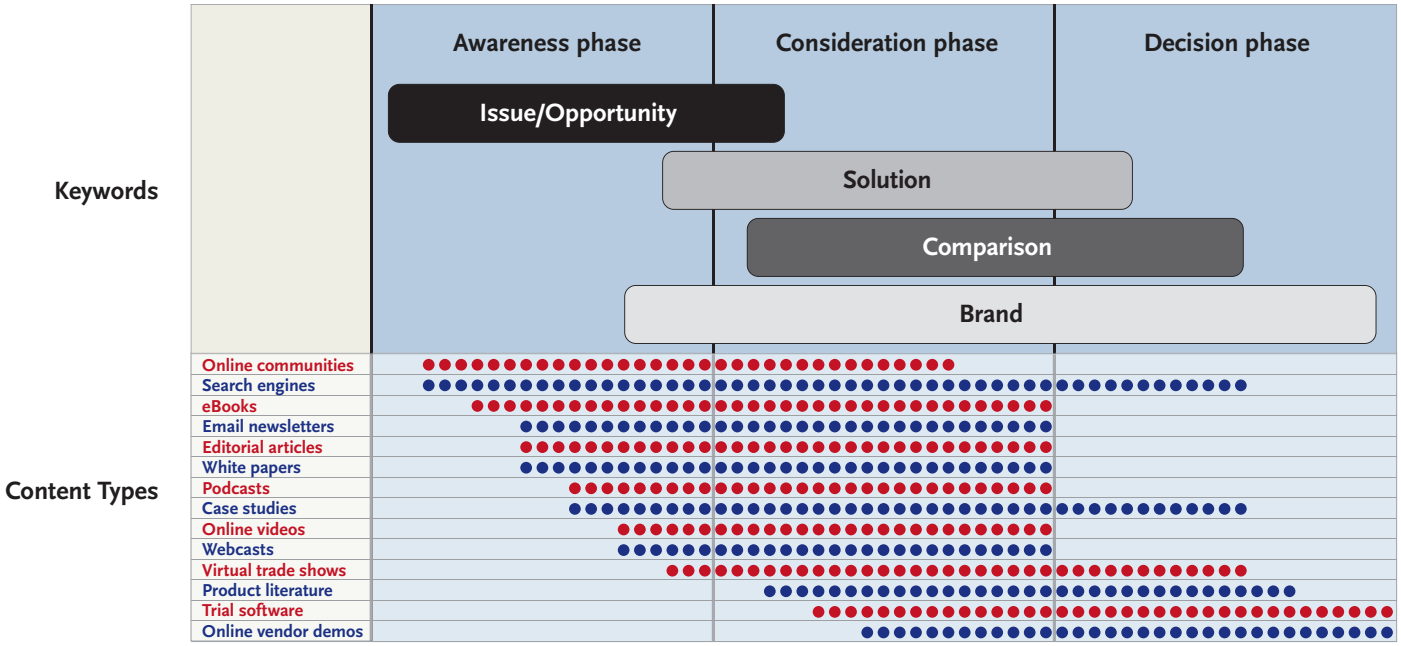
*To get further understanding, we took a deeper look at keyword usage based on title and stage.*

- *During the consideration stage, directors use more comparison phrases than CIOs or administrators*
- *However, during the decision stage, directors and administrators are more likely to use brand phrases than are CIOs. Whereas CIOs are more likely to use solution phrases.*



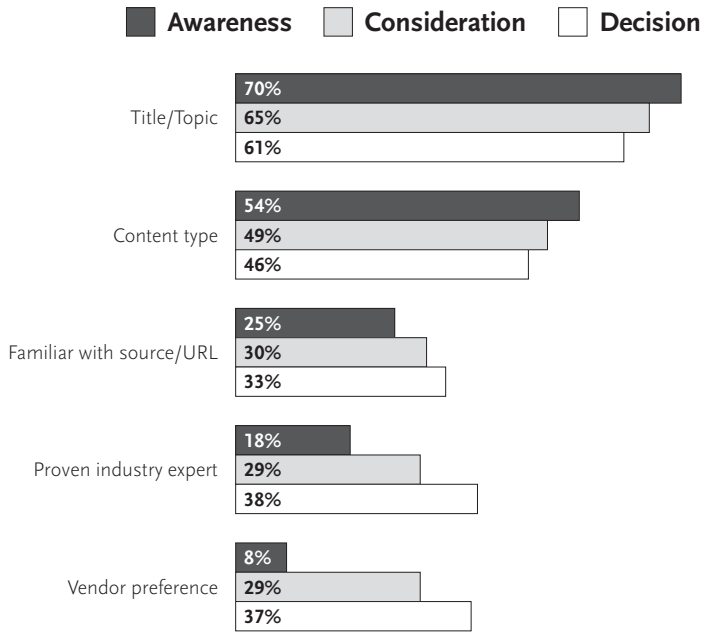
## Keywords and Content Type Mapping to the IT Purchase Process

***Searching for specific brands across all stages seems to be generally more prevalent in this study.***



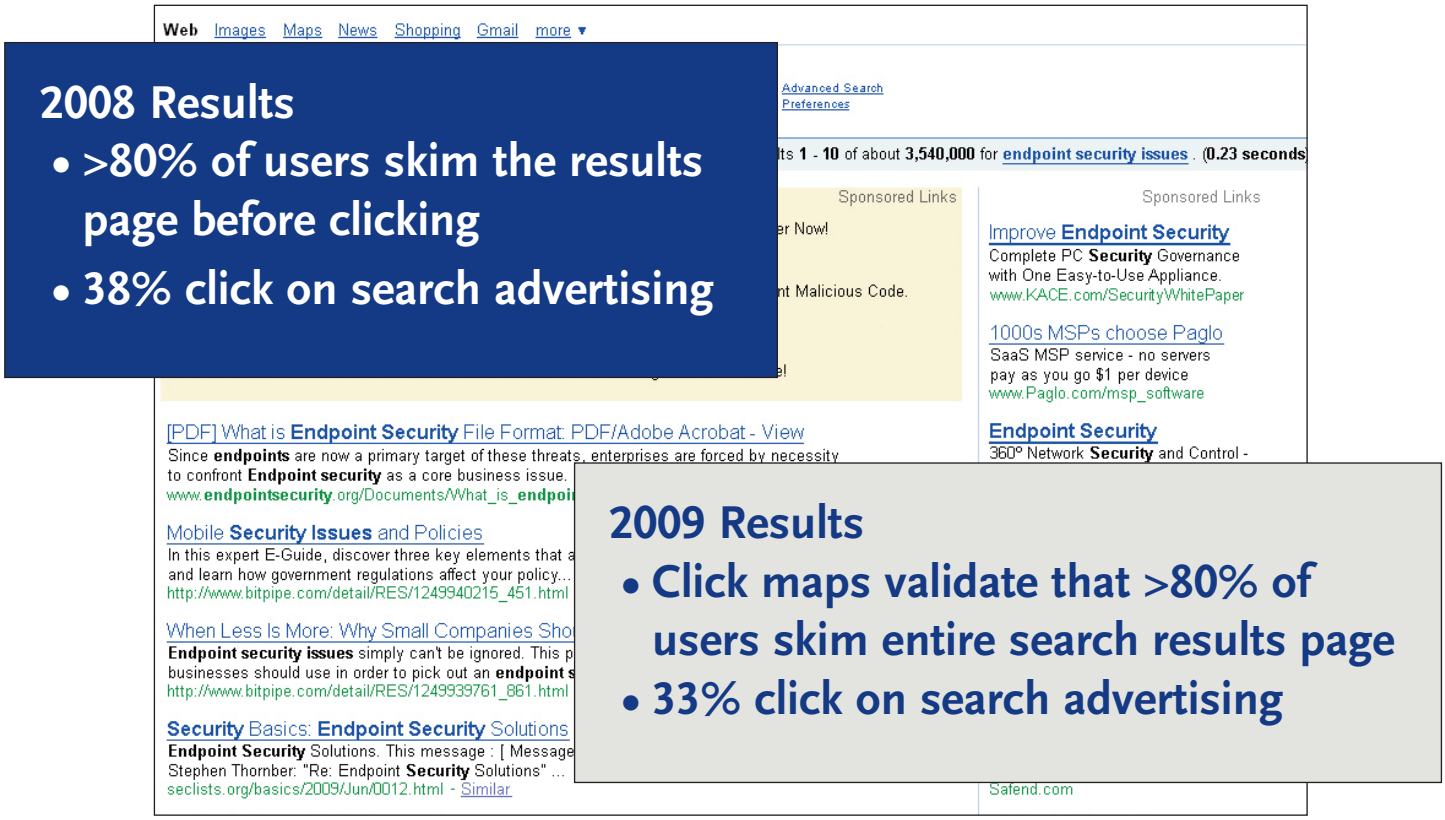
## Click Preferences by Buying Stage

***Title and topic are the most critical to click-throughs in all phases of the buying cycle. Content type is a clear 2nd in importance, which is a major change from 2008 study, where there was no content type preferences. A vendor preference is most notable during the decision stage, but very limited during awareness.***



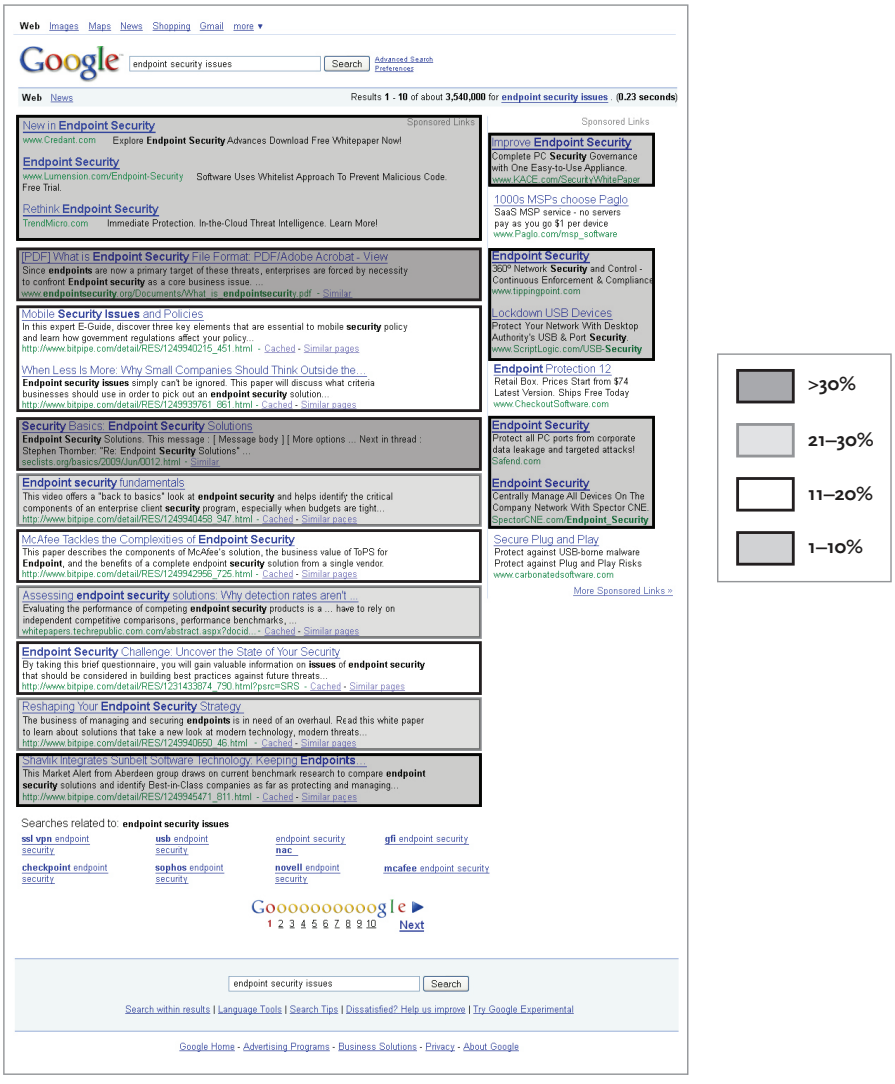

**Question:** **Based on the given search results, why did you select the result you did?**

## Interaction with Search Results Pages



## Click Map: Searches on Endpoint Security Issues

***According to click-map observations, top organic rankings do not equate with the top click rates. Titles and content summaries clearly influence which listings are clicked. Click distribution is even more pronounced for consideration and decision stage searches.***



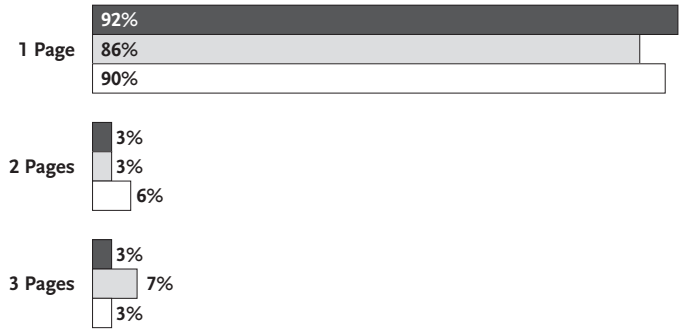
## Search Results Pages Viewed Before Clicking

***Behaviour indicates the vast majority of users click on Page 1 of search results. Clearly users are finding valuable content on Page 1 and only exploring more search results pages as needed.***

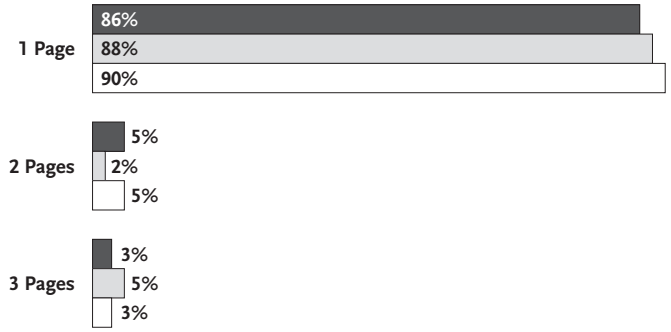
### Awareness Phase




### Consideration Phase



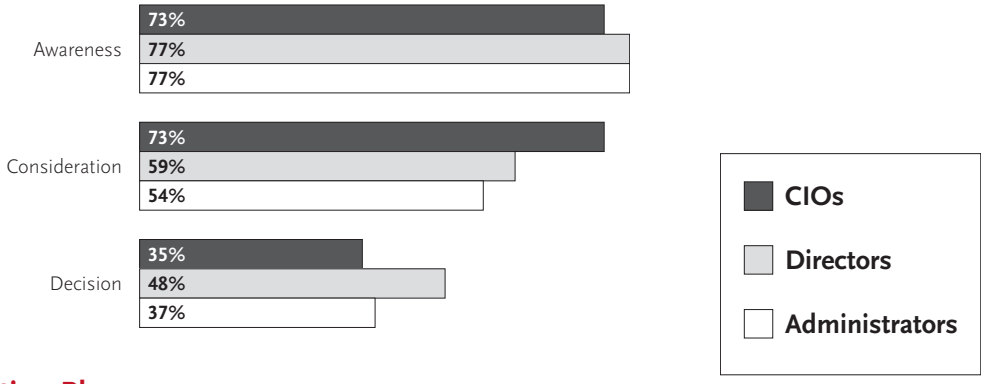

### Decision Phase



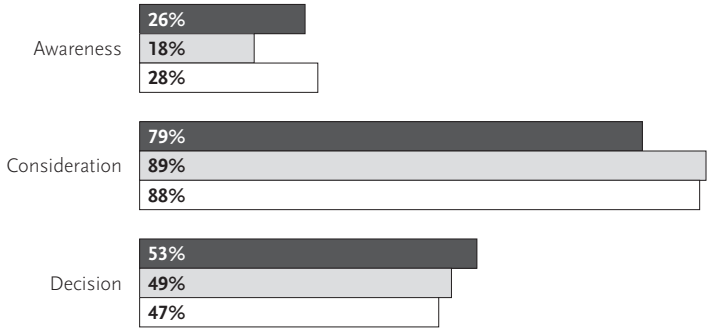
## Types of Content Listings Clicked

***These 3 graphs validate that, as logic would have it, all titles are predominantly looking for content that parallels the stage they are in (awareness and consideration) but in decision phase there is more ambiguity as results reflect both consideration and decision stage listings.***

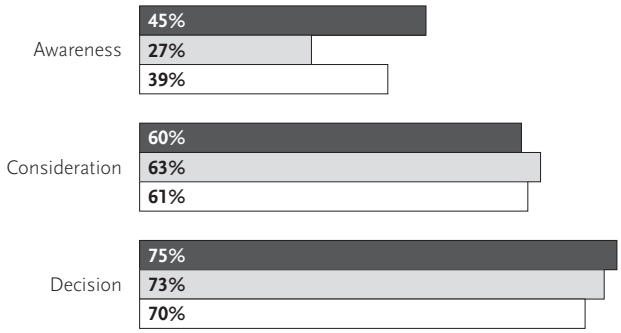
### Awareness Phase




### Consideration Phase




### Decision Phase



## Registration/Demand Generation

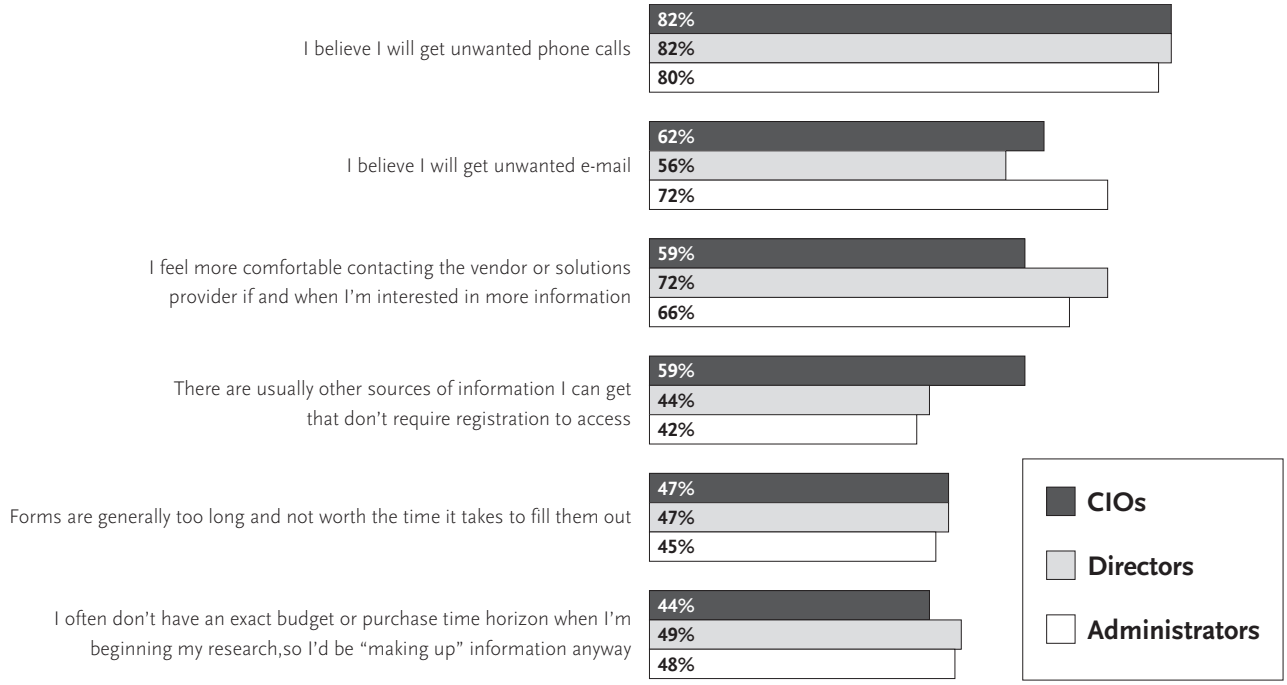
*CIOs and directors are more willing to provide email addresses and phone numbers, with directors being the most willing to provide accurate information overall. UK CIOs and directors are significantly more willing to provide phone numbers in comparison to their US counterparts.*

| | 2008 | 2009 |
|---|---|---|
| Email address | 81% | 67% |
| First name | 79% | 61% |
| Last name | 73% | 60% |
| Company name | 66% | 58% |
| Job title | 62% | 62% |
| Company size | 39% | 50% |
| Purchase influence (budget, area of influence) | 32% | 40% |
| Telephone number | 27% | 21% |
| Readiness to buy or time horizon to purchase | 23% | 27% |

**Question:** When accessing certain information from IT-related websites, you may be required to complete a registration form. Which of the following information are you willing to provide accurately?

## Withholding Information on Registration Forms

***IT Professionals withhold information to prevent unwanted phone calls and emails, and because they would prefer to initiate the contact when they are ready. Almost 50% of users withhold accurate information because they are doing early stage research and aren't ready to be contacted. 81% are concerned about unwanted phone calls.***




**Question:** **Why do you withhold the information you mentioned when completing an online registration form?**

# About TechTarget

TechTarget, a leading online technology media company, gives technology providers ROI-focused marketing programs to generate leads, shorten sales cycles, and grow revenues. With its network of more than 80 technology-specific websites and more than 8.5 million registered members, TechTarget is a primary Web destination for technology professionals researching products to purchase. The company is also a leading provider of independent, peer and vendor content, a leading distributor of white papers, and a leading producer of webcasts, podcasts, videos and virtual trade shows for the technology market. Its websites are complemented by numerous invitation-only events. TechTarget provides proven lead generation and branding programs to top advertisers including Cisco, Dell, EMC, HP, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, SAP and Symantec.

# About Google Inc.

Google's innovative search technologies connect millions of people around the world with information every day. Founded in 1998 by Stanford Ph.D. students Larry Page and Sergey Brin, Google today is a top web property in all major global markets. Google's targeted advertising program provides businesses of all sizes with measurable results, while enhancing the overall web experience for users. Google is headquartered in Silicon Valley with offices throughout the Americas, Europe and Asia. For more information, visit www.google.com.

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