

Albertans protect themselves from online fraud: TD poll

- Third annual TD Canada Trust Fraud Prevention Month poll reveals 79% of Albertans are concerned about online fraud and many are taking action to protect themselves -

CALGARY (February 27, 2012) – Aware of a new breed of fraudster lurking online in social media sites, unsecure Wi-Fi networks and online app stores, many Albertans are concerned they may become a victim of online fraud as criminals develop sophisticated ways to steal or trick consumers into revealing personal information.

According to the 2012 TD Canada Trust Fraud Prevention Month poll, Albertans are most likely in the country to be concerned in general about becoming a victim of fraud (81% versus 72% nationally). In addition, many are worried about emerging types of fraud such as online fraud¹ (79%), malicious social media apps² (76%), phishing³ (74%) and fraudulent cell phone apps⁴ (63%).

“As technology continues to evolve, so too are the tricks fraudsters use to try and steal your personal information,” says Shawnette Fraser, Manager, Customer Experience, TD Canada Trust. “Banks and credit card companies have sophisticated security measures in place and work closely with law enforcement to protect their customers, but it is important to remember that you are the first line of defence.”

The good news is Albertans are taking actions to protect themselves from these ‘online bandits’, including:

- Ensuring their computer’s security software and virus/malware protection is up-to-date (80%)
- Subscribing to the highest level of privacy on their social media accounts (65%)
- Never texting or emailing banking information (46%)
- Using an automatic lock function with a password-protection feature whenever their mobile phone, tablet, computer starts-up or times-out (43%)
- Never sharing email or social media site passwords (42%)
- Never downloading social media apps from unknown sources (41%)

Fraser says an emerging type of fraud consumers should watch out for is malicious smartphone and social media apps that are designed to steal personal information, which is then used to commit fraud.

“It’s encouraging to see so many Albertans are taking steps to protect themselves from fraud, but remember that fraudsters can lurk in unsuspecting places – including social media sites and even in mobile phone app stores – so it’s important you remain vigilant,” she says. “Always be cautious when downloading apps for your cell phone, tablet or computer. Try to stay with apps from well-known and trusted brands. For example, mobile banking apps from major financial institutions, like the TD Canada Trust mobile app, maintain a high level of security and integrity so are safe and secure to use.”

¹ When a fraudster gathers some of your banking information (like account details and passwords), and uses the information to perform online banking.

² Apps designed to steal your personal information, or send out malicious messages or computer viruses to your contacts without your consent

³ A crime in which fraudulent emails and websites are used to trick consumers into providing personal information, which is then used to commit a fraud

⁴ Malicious apps disguised as games or apps from credible brands designed to steal information from smart phones or send out expensive text messages without the users' consent

Albertans are taking action to protect themselves

The poll revealed Albertans are more concerned this year about some traditional forms of fraud – including identity theft (93% versus 88% in 2011) and debit card fraud (87% versus 85% in 2011) – but more people are taking precautions to protect themselves. Compared to last year, more Albertans have spoken to their bank about reducing their withdrawal limit (26% versus 20% in 2011) and change their PINs every couple of months (20% versus 14% in 2011).

But Fraser says some Albertans are still engaging in risky behaviour that can make them vulnerable: 17% admit they have carried their debit card or credit card PIN in their wallet and 14% have told someone their PIN.

“Most fraud can be avoided if you are proactive and follow a few basic tips, like shielding your PIN when making a transaction, safeguarding your personal information online and offline, and monitoring your bank account activity for anything unusual,” she says. “If you think that you may have been a victim of fraud, contact your financial institution immediately.”

In support of Fraud Prevention Month, TD Canada Trust has developed a new quiz to help Albertans determine how fraud-savvy they are and learn what they can do to help protect themselves:

3RD ANNUAL TD CANADA TRUST FRAUD PREVENTION QUIZ

Has social media and email made you an “over-sharer”?

1. True or False: If your bank needs to contact you, they may email you and ask you for your account information.

False: Your bank will never contact you by email asking for account information. If you have been emailed for this information then you have likely been “phished.” Phishing refers to an online scam that seeks out personal financial information from people who believe they are sharing their information with a legitimate website or organization.

2. True or False: The anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your computer is sufficient to protect your personal information.

False: Anti-virus and internet security software only helps protect your personal information if the software is up-to-date, and if it has the latest firewall installed. Fraudsters are always developing new ways to obtain your personal information online. For example, if malicious software gets uploaded onto your device it can track what you do online, tap into your personal information and even create spam that comes under the identity of a friend. Always be cautious when downloading apps.

3. True or False: There are simple clues to figure out whether or not a website is safe.

True: To see if a site is secure, check the lower corner of your browser window or to the right of the address bar, for a padlock. Any time you’re on a screen to send personal information, make sure the padlock is closed or the key is intact. This indicates that security technology will scramble your personal information as it’s being transmitted. As well, the secure website address will begin with “https://”.

4. True or False: Sending an e-mail money transfer gives you the same security as online banking.

True: One of the biggest misconceptions about e-Transfers is that they are not secure. In reality, e-Transfers offer the same level of security and confidentiality as any online banking transaction. The e-mail notification of the transfer doesn't include the money or any banking information, only a notification of the pending transfer. In order for the recipient to collect the money, they must log into their own online banking service and correctly answer a security question.

5. True or False: It's not as important to be vigilant about transactions in brick and mortar stores because most fraudsters have moved online and found new ways to get personal information.

False: It's ALWAYS important to protect your personal information, on or offline. Financial institutions continually upgrade the sophisticated security measures they have in place to protect customers from fraud (e.g. CHIP technology on cards), but you should also do what you can to protect yourself by knowing where your cards are at all times and shielding the keypad when you enter your PIN.

For more information on fraud prevention, you can visit:

http://www.td.com/privacyandsecurity/protect_yourself.jsp

About the 2012 TD Canada Trust Fraud Prevention Month Poll

Results were collected through Environics' national telephone omnibus between January 24-29, 2012. A total of 1,000 interviews were completed, including 125 with Alberta residents.

About TD Bank Group

The Toronto-Dominion Bank and its subsidiaries are collectively known as TD Bank Group (TD). TD is the sixth largest bank in North America by branches and serves approximately 20.5 million customers in four key businesses operating in a number of locations in key financial centres around the globe: Canadian Personal and Commercial Banking, including TD Canada Trust and TD Auto Finance Canada; Wealth and Insurance, including TD Waterhouse, an investment in TD Ameritrade, and TD Insurance; U.S. Personal and Commercial Banking, including TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank, and TD Auto Finance U.S.; and Wholesale Banking, including TD Securities. TD also ranks among the world's leading online financial services firms, with more than 7.5 million online customers. TD had CDN \$733 billion in assets on October 31, 2011.

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