In recent years there has been a significant increase in cyber attacks across the globe. This has impacted many parts of life, but the increased threat has been especially real for high-risk users, those in the public eye such as journalists and politicians. Google has worked with YouGov to understand how those working in these professions feel about the cyber threats posed to them, how these threats have evolved, and what they are doing to protect themselves.

And they have felt these threats personally. A large number have experienced a hack or have had content accessed without permission. The majority of high profile individuals demand greater cybersecurity protection. This call for greater protection is likely due to the complexity it adds to high profile roles.

When it comes to who holds most responsibility for device protection, high profile individuals are divided. Most politicians (55%) feel it’s predominantly up to their IT Managers to ensure devices and data are protected, whereas most journalists (61%) feel it’s their own responsibility.

Both groups choose to protect themselves in similar ways, with passwords remaining a core focus. Some techniques remain largely unexplored, despite the benefit and protection they could provide.

Defend against targeted online attacks with Google’s strongest account security. For most, Google’s built-in account security is all they need to keep their information secure. But for people at risk of targeted attacks, we offer the Advanced Protection Programme.

High profile individuals across the globe are feeling the strain when it comes to cybersecurity. 71% believe that their professions make them more likely to be a target of hacking or phishing. 81% believe that the threat of cyber attacks on journalists and politicians has increased in the last two years. 78% believe this is a result of increasingly sophisticated hacking/phishing techniques.

Journalists and politicians around the world reported a similar level of hacking. 55% have had their accounts hacked, with 37% experiencing this in the past year alone. 89% agree that cybersecurity protections for people in high profile roles need to be improved - not one journalist disagreed across all markets.

This call for greater protection is likely due to the complexity it adds to high profile roles. 50% believe that increased threats have made their jobs harder to do.

Less than a quarter of politicians (23%) and journalists (21%) are only using devices issued by their workplace over the past two years. Less than a third of both groups (31%) have undertaken cybersecurity training.

Google, in partnership with YouGov, surveyed 705 respondents (350 politicians and 355 journalists) across ten markets: UK, US, BRU, CAN, FR, DE, IT, NL, PL, & ES, with the research taking place between 26 October and 1 December 2021.

To date we have seen no evidence of a successful phishing attempt on accounts enrolled in the Advanced Protection Programme.