Belgians do not want a digitised identity card on smartphones

Deloitte survey: Belgians increasingly use smartphones for health monitoring and banking, yet are not receptive to digital identification solutions.

Brussels, 28 November 2023 - Every year, Deloitte surveys the technology habits of consumers across Europe in its Digital Consumer Trends Report. Once again, this year, there are some interesting conclusions on Belgians’ use of technology. For example, it turns out that we like paying with our smartphones, yet for surfing and online shopping we still prefer using our laptops. Strikingly, we also increasingly use smartphones to monitor our health and would also like to share this data with our doctor. On the other hand, Belgians are less enthusiastic about fully digital identification solutions, such as a digital identity card on smartphones.

One in two use smartphones for physical payments

We are increasingly using our smartphones to manage our banking affairs. For instance, the mobile phone in our pocket is the tool of choice for online banking or making physical payments in shops. Deloitte research now shows that one in two Belgians regularly use their smartphone to make physical payments.

For some things, though, we prefer to stick to alternatives. For instance, we prefer streaming on our television and for online surfing or shopping we stick to the trusty laptop.

71% do not want a digital identity card on smartphones

Although we are increasingly exchanging our bank card for smartphones, we do seem to be holding on to the physical identity card. Deloitte’s survey, for instance, shows that as many as 71% of Belgians would not want a digital identity card on their smartphone. Most (79%) are also not fans of a digital driving licence. So, while we trust the smartphone to access our bank accounts, we seem to be a bit more cautious with our identity.

"We notice a great reluctance among people when it comes to using the smartphone as an identification solution. Often this is not necessarily due to a distrust of the technology – as we already use the device to do our banking – but rather a reaction to the centralisation of everything in our lives around the smartphone. For some things, people just seem happy to still rely on the old-fashioned card, which works even when their smartphone’s battery is dead. Thus, we find that 1 in 2 Belgians not only refuse to fully digitise their identity documents, but also prefer to rely on old-fashioned trusted solutions for the keys to their house and car," said Vincent Fosty.

Battery life is the most important criterion for smartphones

The survey also polled what consumers consider most important when buying a smartphone. Here, battery life (39%), ease of use (34%) and storage capacity (27%) topped the list. The device’s durability and ecological impact are the least important to consumers. It shows that the increasingly important role of the smartphone in our lives also has an impact on the demands we place on it.

"The fact that battery life is the most important criteria for consumers reflects the increasingly prominent role of the smartphone in our daily lives. As we use the device for more and more important things, it is also crucial for consumers that they can continue to rely on it throughout the day without having to worry about their smart phone failing due to a flat battery," concluded Vincent Fosty.
Half of Belgians monitoring health via smartphones also want to share that data with their doctor

In recent years, the use of wearables such as smartwatches and fitness trackers has increased significantly. Due to the growing market, more and more consumers are using their smartphones to monitor their health. For example, almost half of adults with a smartphone count their steps daily. Just over a quarter monitor their heart rate and 21% keep data on their sleep patterns. Only 34% do not keep any health data at all.

Here, there is a clear difference between men and women. For instance, men (29%) measure their heart rate more often than women (23%). In turn, women (51%) measure the number of steps more often than men (44%). In general, it is mainly young people (18-24 years old) who monitor their health the most via their smartphones.

"What is striking is that more than half of those surveyed who monitor health data with their smart phones (54%) would also like to share that data with their doctor. So, while we are reluctant to allow digital identification solutions, we see fewer concerns around sharing personal health data with a doctor," said Vincent Fosty.

For more information: www.deloitte.com/be/digital-consumer-trends

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