**Media release**

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**University of Waikato research reveals Kiwis value privacy, security and trust most when using encryption**

An ongoing [study](https://www.waikato.ac.nz/law/research/information-law-and-policy-project) by researchers at the University of Waikato has found that New Zealanders place the highest value on privacy, data protection, information security, and trust. These are closely followed by national security and public safety and right to property as the top principles and values concerning encryption.

The results confirm that people primarily use encryption to protect the confidentiality, integrity and authenticity of their information and communications. However, people also recognise that the use of this technology affects public interest values such as national security and effective law enforcement.

The perennial conflict between human rights and law enforcement concerns is known as the encryption dilemma. The researchers believe that focusing on the principles and values of encryption, most especially trust, may help solve this problem.

As Dr Michael Dizon explains, “Trust cuts across and connects the different principles, values and uses of encryption. Users have to be able to: first, trust that the technology is safe and secure; second, trust companies with their privacy and security; and, finally, trust the government to respect their human rights”.

According to the researchers, it is crucial to take into account and build trust when developing laws and policies on encryption. “If governments decide to require backdoors in encryption, then no one will trust or use it because it’s insecure. If law enforcement agencies are granted the power to compel people to disclose their encryption passwords, this could result in greater mistrust of government”.

The principal investigators of the study are [Dr Michael Dizon](https://www.waikato.ac.nz/law/about-us/staff/academic/mdizon), [Associate Professor Wayne Rumbles](https://www.waikato.ac.nz/law/about-us/staff/academic/wayner) and [Associate Professor Ryan Ko](https://www.waikato.ac.nz/staff-profiles/people/ryan), who are members of the law and computer science faculties of the University of Waikato. Their findings are based on an analysis of data gathered from focus group discussions held with representatives from businesses, government, and the general public around the country.

The study is funded by the New Zealand Law Foundation’s [Information Law and Policy Project (ILAPP)](https://www.lawfoundation.org.nz/?page_id=7029), which is intended to explore and develop law and policy to help New Zealand adapt to future changes in the information age, and the University of Waikato’s Strategic Investment Fund – Research.

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