



## Edward Snowden condemns Amazon's 'morally irresponsible' encryption policy -- users don't care

By [Mark Wilson](#)

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In a near-perfect example of how there is always more than one way to look at things, [Edward Snowden](#) has very different views on Amazon than Amazon users do. On Friday, Snowden appeared -- as ever -- via video link at the surveillance symposium at the Cato Institute. He condemned Amazon's lack of encryption of customers' searches, referring to the practice as "morally irresponsible".

But Snowden's condemnation of Amazon comes at the same time as a study by Bizrate Insights which finds that more than 45 percent of online shoppers trust the site with their payment and personal information. So why the disparity?

As we know from the past twelve months, Edward Snowden is a man with more than a passing interest in privacy. His disdain for Amazon's attitude to encryption has been reported in -- of all places -- the [Washington Post](#). This is interesting because, as pointed out in the article, Jeff Bezos is not only the founder and chief executive of Amazon, but also the owner of the Washington Post.

Snowden is concerned that Amazon goes to the effort of encrypting payments while failing to do the same for customer searches. This means, he says, that the reading and shopping habits of Amazon's customers are open to governmental snooping. While it's unlikely that the government is interested in which books you buy from Amazon, this is not really the point, and Snowden suggests that anyone from ISPs to network providers could see what you're looking for.

At the same time a survey of over 6,200 people carried out by [Bizrate Insights](#) showed that while more than three quarters of online shoppers are unhappy with the level of security offered by retailers, Amazon actually fared well in the trust rankings. The online giant found itself in third position, gaining the trust of 45.4 percent of people -- it fell behind PayPal (48.9 percent), and banks and credit unions (72 percent).

Hayley Silver, vice president of Bizrate Insights said:

Among these tech transactional titans, it is those that have low barriers for usage *and* that have put consumer protection in the forefront that have earned the greatest amount of trust.

Lower down the list, Apple was trusted by just 21.4 percent of those questioned, eBay by 18.7 percent, and Google a mere 12.9 percent.