**TEMPLATE**

**Worldwide consumer movement calls for Trusted Smart Products**

This World Consumer Rights Day, 15 March 2019, consumer organisations around the world are joining together to call for [Trusted Smart Products](https://www.consumersinternational.org/what-we-do/world-consumer-rights-day/trusted-smart-products/).

The day, co-ordinated by Consumers International, the membership organisation for

consumer groups around the world, is aiming to create a #BetterDigitalWorld by calling for smart products and phones to be built with safety and security, data privacy and protection in mind, as well as ensuring fair pricing and better access to mobile internet.

World Consumer Rights Day takes place every year to highlight consumer protection and empowerment issues, bringing together the global consumer movement to make lasting changes for people around the world.

Smart technology is a growing global phenomenon which is fundamentally changing the nature of many consumer products and services. The number of smart products has increased dramatically over the last few years, with smart products now outnumbering people three to one and smart phone connections doubling from two billion to four billion since 2015. Alongside this growth comes an increased concern about privacy, with 52% of users more concerned about their online privacy compared to one year ago[[1]](#footnote-1).

However, the uptake of smart products and phones has been much slower in developing countries. One reason for this is the proportionally high cost of data in these countries. For example, buying 1GB of data in Africa costs on average 18% of a person’s monthly income[[2]](#footnote-2). This World Consumer Rights Day, the Trusted Smart Products campaign will aim to highlight the importance of ensuring that everyone has access to reliable and affordable mobile internet.

Consumers’ lack of trust in smart products has been heightened by several high-profile privacy and data breaches. For example, in 2016 nearly 65,000 smart devices were infected in 24 hours, gaining access through unsecure printers, home Wi-Fi routers and baby monitors[[3]](#footnote-3).

Attacks like this are dangerous because the hacker’s software searches for and then attacks any smart system in its chosen radius. This could involve stealing bank details, controlling webcams and microphones, and taking control of any smart device in the house3. As smart products become an increasingly common part of daily life, Consumers International wants to shine a light on the ways in which security and privacy can be built into the development process.

To do this, Consumers International created ‘Connect Smart’ tips in collaboration with [the Internet Society](https://www.internetsociety.org/) to help consumers stay safe whilst using smart products. The tips are accompanied by a video highlighting some of the potential risks of smart products, which can be found at [www.connect-smart.org](http://www.connect-smart.org).

Phillipa Hunt, Strategy Development and Communications Director of Consumers International states: “Consumers International is working with members and partners to deliver positive impacts for consumers in the digital economy and society. People shouldn’t have to put themselves and their families at risk when using smart products, and we want to make sure they can get the best out of digital developments, including the [Internet of Things](https://www.consumersinternational.org/what-we-do/digital/internet-of-things/), without having to compromise on safety and accessibility”.

To find out more about World Consumer Rights Day, learn more about trusted smart products and find out about activities in your country, visit Consumers International’s [Trusted Smart Products webpage](https://www.consumersinternational.org/what-we-do/world-consumer-rights-day/trusted-smart-products/), or follow the #BetterDigitalWorld hashtag on Twitter and Facebook.

**Notes for Editors**

* Consumers International is the membership organisation for consumer groups around the world.
* We bring together over 200-member organisations in more than 100 countries to empower and champion the rights of consumers everywhere. We are their voice in international policy-making forums and the global marketplace to ensure they are treated safely, fairly and honestly.
* World Consumer Rights Day has been celebrated annually on 15 March since 1983. It takes place on the anniversary of President John F. Kennedy’s address to the US Congress on 15 March 1962, in which he formally addressed the issue of consumer rights. He was the first world leader to do so.

1. [*2018 CIGI-Ipsos Global Survey on Internet Security and Trust*](https://www.cigionline.org/internet-survey-2018) CIGI-Ipsos, 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [*2017 Affordability Report*](http://1e8q3q16vyc81g8l3h3md6q5f5e-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/A4AI-2017-Affordability-Report.pdf), A4AI*,* 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [How a dorm room Minecraft scam brought down the internet’](https://www.wired.com/story/mirai-botnet-minecraft-scam-brought-down-the-internet/), *Wired,* 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)