Insurance POST

Government IoT law 'step in the right direction'

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28 Jan 2020

Legislation announced yesterday to protect internet-connected household devices from cyber-attacks sits at the "baseline" of what could be done but is a "step in the right direction," insurers said.

Plans drawn up by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will lay down a set of security standards that smart devices must adhere to.

Under the law, consumer internet-connected device passwords will have to be unique and not re-settable to a universal factory setting.

Internet of things device manufacturers will have to provide a public point of contact for users to report vulnerabilities.

Where issues are reported, they must be responded to in a "timely manner."

Manufacturers will also have to make sure that it the length of time for which the device will receive security updates is clearly stated at the point of purchase.

Digital Minister Matt Warman said: "We want to make the UK the safest place to be online with pro-innovation regulation that breeds confidence in modern technology.

"Our new law will hold firms manufacturing and selling internet-connected devices to account and stop hackers threatening people's privacy and safety.

"It will mean robust security standards are built in from the design stage and not bolted on as an afterthought."

By 2025, research suggests there could be 75 billion internet connected devices in homes worldwide.

Insurers welcomed the government's work on **cyber** risk management, though they suggested that more could be achieved through legislation to encourage confidence from businesses and consumers.

Kenneth Carmichael, UK technology team leader at CFC, said: "Although these requirements are really the baseline of what we'd like to see in terms of security for IoT, the fact that the government is supporting good risk management initiatives with appropriate legislation is a step in the right direction.

"Not only should it bring about more consumer confidence, but it should also improve the confidence of the market and specialist insurers to consider taking on these types of risks.

"It is good to see the UK government in the vanguard here working with international partners to ensure a globally recognised approach to IoT security. Going forward, we would be keen to see industry and trade bodies building on the work the government has started and really getting behind this initiative."

Laura Drabik, chief evangelist, Guidewire Software said: "The growth of IoT enabled services will be curtailed if consumers don't have trust in the safety of the technology, which would be bad news for businesses. By helping to combat the most common

vulnerabilities, this legislation will help open up new opportunities for the insurance industry and business at large."

Graham Walsh, policy adviser, general insurance, Association of British Insurers, added: "Cyber-attacks are the crime of our technological age. The growth in household internet-connected devices opens up further opportunities for cyber criminals to hack personal data, so we welcome measures to make domestic devices more secure against this threat."