Easing Online Data Anxiety

What is the issue?

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- The breach of multiple data bases and the increasing frequency of online theft have created a fear psychosis among the masses worldwide.
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- Dispelling anxieties on sharing data online is vital for enhancing internet's utility as a tool for progress.
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What are some metrics on cyber security?

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- According to a digital security report, a 783% increase in cases of data theft in India was noticed in 2017.
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- Most compromised or stolen records belonged to the government, which was followed by the retail and technology sectors.
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- Globally, sectors which were hit the most by data theft in 2017 were healthcare (27%), financial services (12%), education (11%) and government (11%).
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- The most number of records lost, stolen or compromised was noticed in data bases of - government (18%), financial services (9%) and technology (16%).
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- Additionally, RBI reported a 35% increase in credit, debit card and net banking related fraud since 2013-16 (12,000 cases in 2016).
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What are the implications of these incidences?

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- The cumulative effect of reported security breaches is that a sense of mistrust is taking shape among Internet users regarding data.
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- Reports suggest that a significant number of users have shown unwillingness in sharing basic data like name, location etc, on 3rd party applications.
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- A considerable number of people are said to have reduced sharing data across platforms after the “Facebook - Cambridge Analytica” fiasco.
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- Also, 6% stopped Internet transactions while 28% of users reduced such transactions and 42% reported that they had become “more cautious”.
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What is the way ahead?

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- India’s Internet users expected to hit the 500 million mark this year, and the fear of sharing data online is also growing.
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- Government’s potency to prevent data abuse and cyber crime should build confidence among the masses for them to overcome their anxiety.
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- As a first step, the government should implement the Supreme Court verdict that upheld privacy as a fundamental right.
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Source: The Hindu

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