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Mac Security Survey 2023

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Intro

Welcome to the results of Moonlock's Mac Security Survey 2023!

To understand the state of cybersecurity on Mac, we asked almost **2,000 macOS users** about their experience. From their worries and concerns to their behaviors and misconceptions, here's how Mac users are navigating the increasingly complex security landscape.
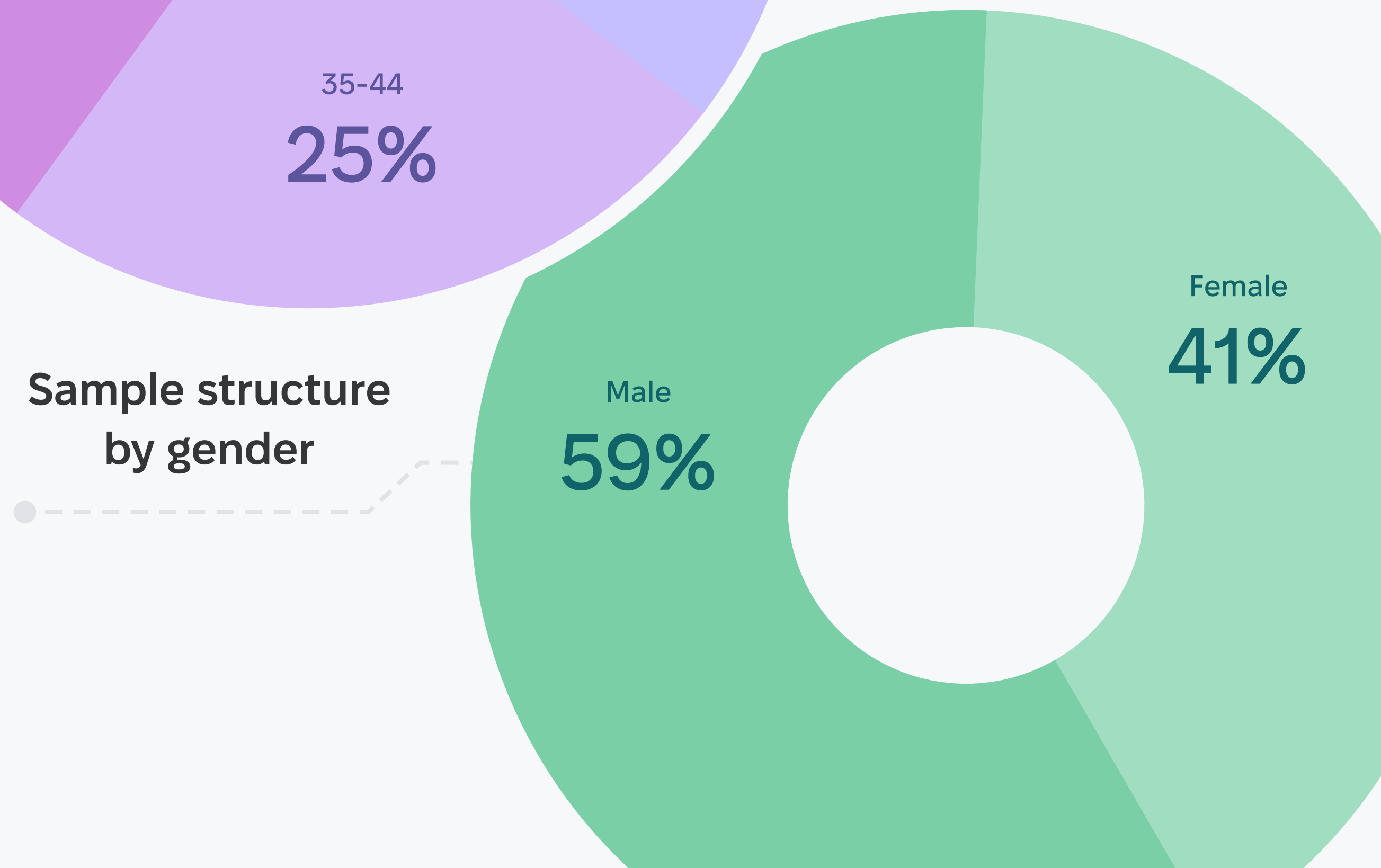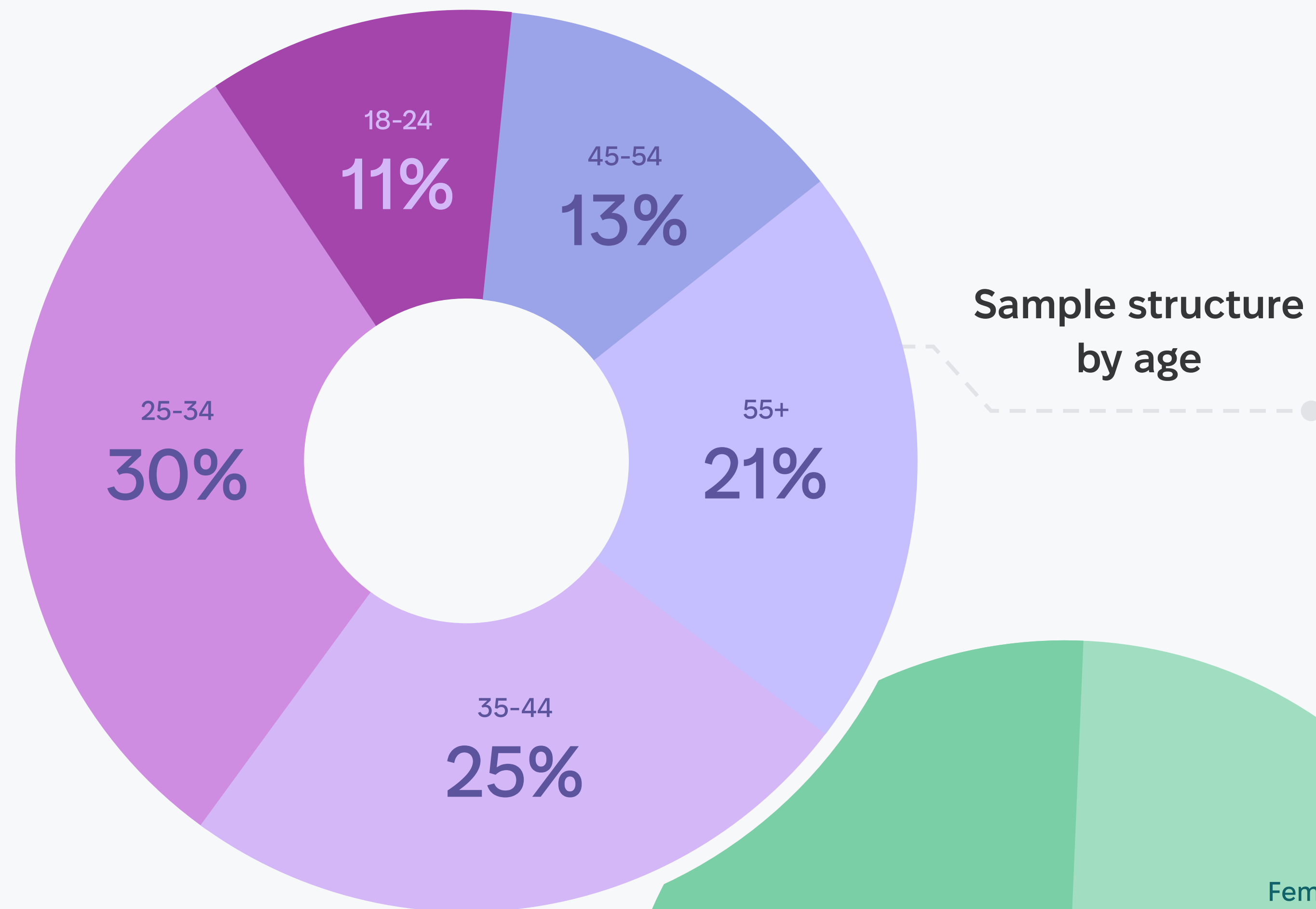
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Methodology

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Method: **Online survey**

Sample: **1,947 macOS users, USA, age 18+**

LOI: **10 min**

IR: **13% without targeting, 28% among Safari users**

Fieldwork: **December 2022**

Sample structure by age

18-24
11%

45-54
13%

55+
21%

35-44
25%

25-34
30%

Sample structure by gender

Female
41%

Male
59%

Key takeaways

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01 Cybersecurity myths are still alive

✦ Every third Mac user believes their **data is of no interest** to cybercriminals.

✦ 28% think **malware does not exist** on macOS.

02 Awareness is high, but risky behaviors abound

✦ Over 80% of Mac users are **aware** of cyber threats, and more than 50% are **concerned** about them.

✦ Yet 22% **use the same password** for multiple accounts, and 31% **skip updates.**

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03 There's a lack of clarity about security tools

✦ 11% of respondents who said they were using a password manager are actually **saving passwords in browsers.**

✦ 35% of self-reported secure browser users named **Safari and Google Chrome,** perceiving them as secure.

04 There's also a lack of reliable info

✦ 52% of Mac users **would like to talk to someone** qualified about how to stay safe online.

✦ 30% say it is **difficult to find a reliable source** of information about it.

05 Mac users are there for each other

✦ 43% of respondents **support others** to help them avoid cybersecurity threats.

✦ 54% **share information** about cyber threats, and 41% **advise** on safe online behavior.

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Pain points & behavior

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59%

believe that proper software can totally protect them from cyber threats.

52%

would like to talk to someone qualified about how to stay safe online.

30%

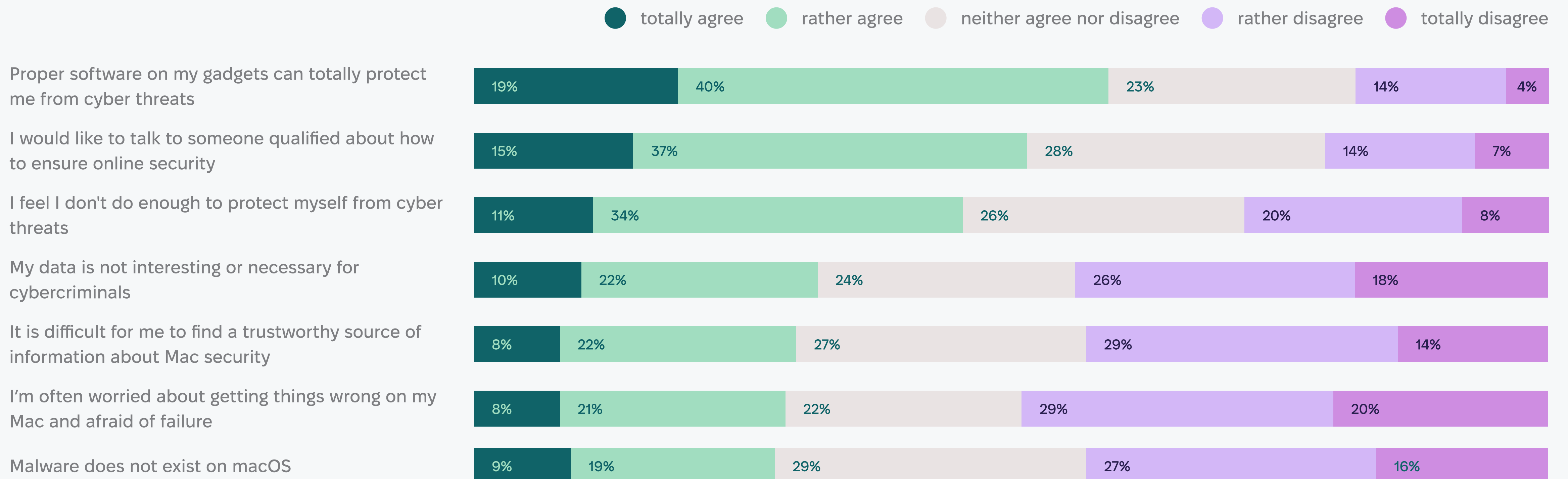say it is difficult to find a reliable source of information about it.

>50%

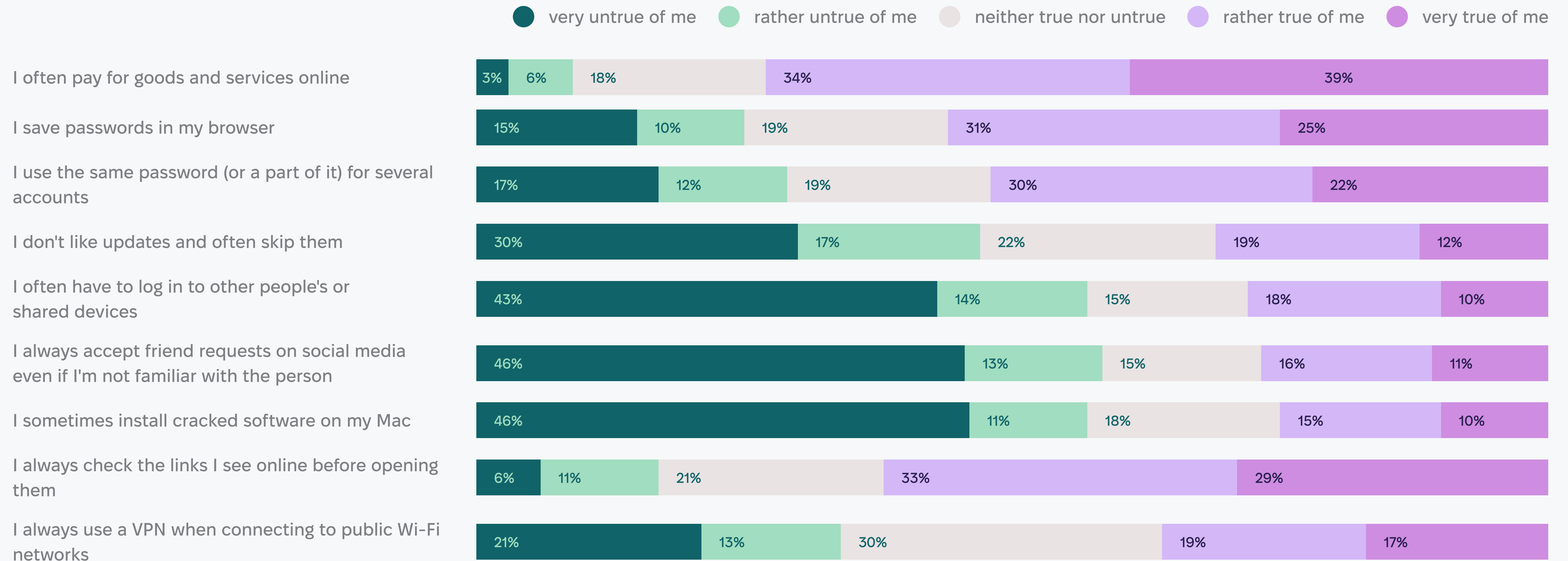of respondents said they save passwords in the browser or reuse passwords for multiple accounts.

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Pain points of Mac users

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the following statements.

● totally agree   ● rather agree   ● neither agree nor disagree   ● rather disagree   ● totally disagree

Statement	totally agree	rather agree	neither agree nor disagree	rather disagree	totally disagree
Proper software on my gadgets can totally protect me from cyber threats	19%	40%	23%	14%	4%
I would like to talk to someone qualified about how to ensure online security	15%	37%	28%	14%	7%
I feel I don't do enough to protect myself from cyber threats	11%	34%	26%	20%	8%
My data is not interesting or necessary for cybercriminals	10%	22%	24%	26%	18%
It is difficult for me to find a trustworthy source of information about Mac security	8%	22%	27%	29%	14%
I'm often worried about getting things wrong on my Mac and afraid of failure	8%	21%	22%	29%	20%
Malware does not exist on macOS	9%	19%	29%	27%	16%

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Online behaviors of Mac users

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the following statements.

● very untrue of me   ● rather untrue of me   ● neither true nor untrue   ● rather true of me   ● very true of me

Statement	very untrue of me	rather untrue of me	neither true nor untrue	rather true of me	very true of me
I often pay for goods and services online	3%	6%	18%	34%	39%
I save passwords in my browser	15%	10%	19%	31%	25%
I use the same password (or a part of it) for several accounts	17%	12%	19%	30%	22%
I don't like updates and often skip them	30%	17%	22%	19%	12%
I often have to log in to other people's or shared devices	43%	14%	15%	18%	10%
I always accept friend requests on social media even if I'm not familiar with the person	46%	13%	15%	16%	11%
I sometimes install cracked software on my Mac	46%	11%	18%	15%	10%
I always check the links I see online before opening them	6%	11%	21%	33%	29%
I always use a VPN when connecting to public Wi-Fi networks	21%	13%	30%	19%	17%

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A little about the differences by age and gender.

Pain points

✧ The younger the respondents, the higher the share of those who agree with the statement "I feel I don't do enough to protect myself from cyber threats".

✧ The statement "I'm often worried about getting things wrong on my Mac and afraid of failure" finds more support among middle-aged people (31-35%) than those aged 55+ (21%).

✧ 37% of men and 23% of women agree that malware does not exist on macOS (no other statement demonstrates such difference by gender).

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A little about the differences by age and gender.

Behavior

Men are more likely to engage in risky behaviors than women:

✧ install cracked software more often

✧ skip updates more often

✧ have to log in to shared devices more often

✧ are more likely to accept friend requests from strangers

Respondents aged 25–44 are more likely to engage in risky practices than younger or older people.

Awareness & concerns

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Mac users' awareness of different types of cyber threats is quite high. More than **50%** of Mac users have been affected by malware, hacking, or scam (either them personally or someone in their closest environment).

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Over 80% of Mac users are aware of cyber threats.

Have you ever heard about the following cybersecurity threat?

- ● Yes, I have, and I know well what it means
- ● Yes, I have, but I'm not sure what it means
- ● Yes, I have but I don't know what it means
- ● No, I have never heard about this

Threat	Yes, know well	Yes, not sure	Yes, don't know	Never heard
Scam	75%	17%	7%	1%
Hacking accounts, stealing passwords	75%	19%	6%	1%
Identity theft (including SSN theft)	74%	17%	7%	1%
Breach of personal data	68%	23%	7%	2%
Collection of personal data from browsers, social networks	68%	24%	7%	2%
Malware, viruses	65%	24%	8%	2%
Phishing	58%	27%	10%	5%
Access to correspondence, private files	57%	28%	10%	5%
Violation of online payment security	54%	29%	9%	7%

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Over 50% of Mac users have been affected by malware, hacking, or scam. 69% of Mac users have personally experienced at least one of these threats.

Have you, your friends or your family ever experienced the following?

● Yes, I have ● Yes, a family member or a close friend has ● I've heard that someone I know has ● No/Don't know
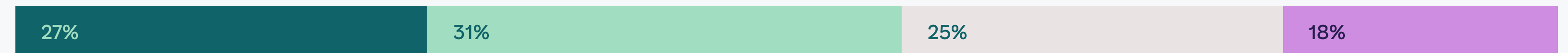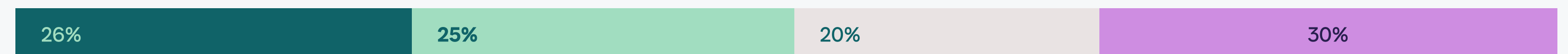
	Yes, I have	Yes, a family member or a close friend has	I've heard that someone I know has	No/Don't know
Malware, viruses	34%	28%	21%	18%
Hacking accounts, stealing passwords	28%	29%	22%	21%
Scam	27%	31%	25%	18%
Collection of personal data from browsers, social networks	26%	25%	20%	30%
Breach of personal data	25%	27%	21%	28%
Phishing	23%	26%	22%	29%
Violation of online payment security	19%	26%	20%	36%
Identity theft (including SSN theft)	16%	27%	24%	33%
Access to correspondence, private files	14%	21%	20%	44%
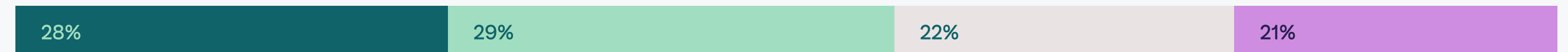
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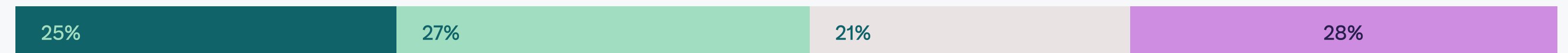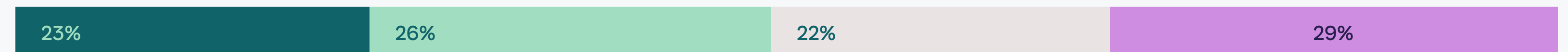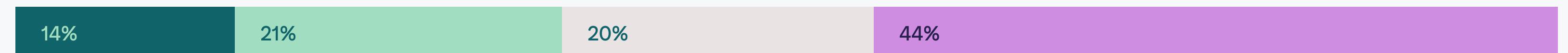
More than 50% of respondents are concerned about cyber threats.

✧ The biggest concerns are identity theft, account hacking, and insecure online payments.

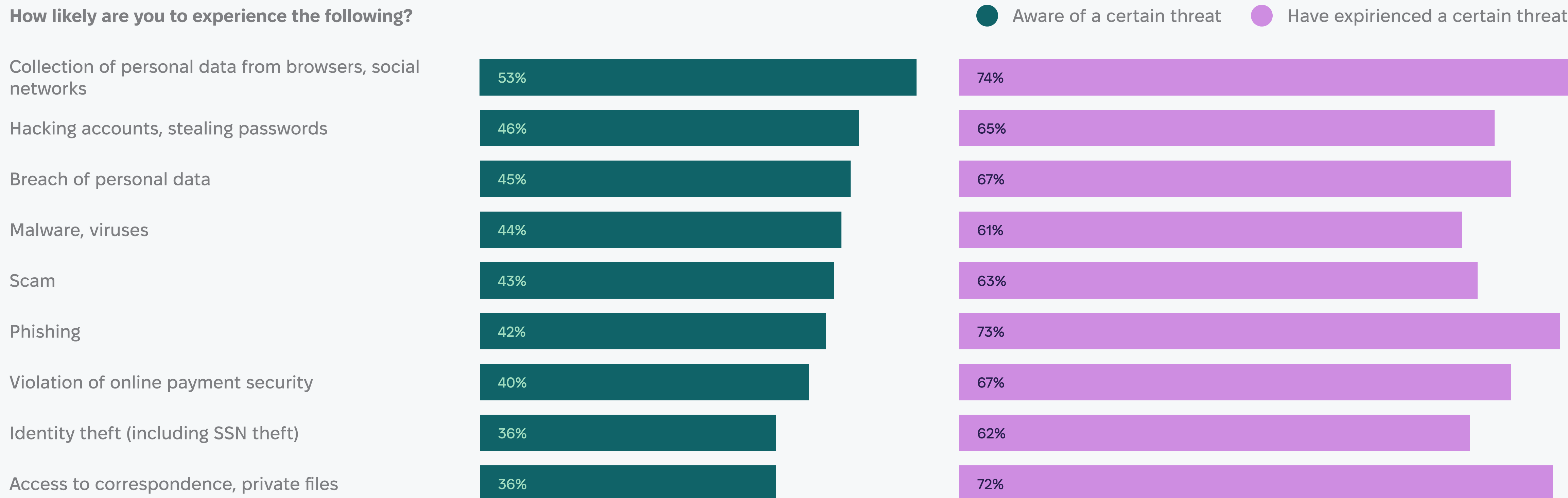✧ The share of concerned is significantly higher among those who have experienced a certain cyber threat.

How concerned do you feel about the following?

● Aware of a certain threat ● Have expirienced a certain threat

Threat	Aware	Experienced
Identity theft (including SSN theft)	68%	82%
Hacking accounts, stealing passwords	66%	74%
Violation of online payment security	65%	72%
Breach of personal data	63%	73%
Collection of personal data from browsers, social networks	60%	69%
Malware, viruses	59%	65%
Access to correspondence, private files	55%	73%
Scam	54%	64%
Phishing	52%	59%

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Between 36% and 46% highly estimate the likelihood of becoming a victim of a particular cyber crime.

✧ The highest estimated likelihood is for the collection of personal data from browsers and social networks (53%).

✧ The share of those who consider a certain threat likely is significantly higher among those who have already experienced it.

How likely are you to experience the following?

● Aware of a certain threat   ● Have expirienced a certain threat

How likely are you to experience the following?	Aware of a certain threat	Have expirienced a certain threat
Collection of personal data from browsers, social networks	53%	74%
Hacking accounts, stealing passwords	46%	65%
Breach of personal data	45%	67%
Malware, viruses	44%	61%
Scam	43%	63%
Phishing	42%	73%
Violation of online payment security	40%	67%
Identity theft (including SSN theft)	36%	62%
Access to correspondence, private files	36%	72%

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A little about the differences by age and gender.

✦ The 55+ age group feels more aware of all types of threats than younger respondents.

✦ In the 18-24 age group, the likelihood of all threats is estimated to be lower than in other age groups and the total sample.

✦ Men rate the likelihood of almost all threats higher than women.

✦ Women feel more aware of all types of threats compared to men.

✦ Women are more likely than men to have been affected by account hacking, stolen passwords (30% vs. 24%), and men are more likely to have experienced access to correspondence or private files (18% vs. 12%).

Security software usage

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01 **Apple's default software** covers a significant share of needs for security products.

02 **Antivirus/firewall** and **password managers** are the leaders in the security software category among Mac users.

03 Over 70% of respondents say that their decision to use a particular product was theirs.

04 More Mac users are paying for antivirus, VPN, and storage services than for other security products.

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Antivirus/firewall and password managers are the leaders in the security software category among Mac users.

Antivirus, firewall — 49%

Password manager — 46%

Secure browser, browser add-on — 36%

Ad blocker, Tracker blocker — 36%

VPN — 30%

Secure data storage and backup — 30%

Data leaks monitors — 12%

None of the above — 12%
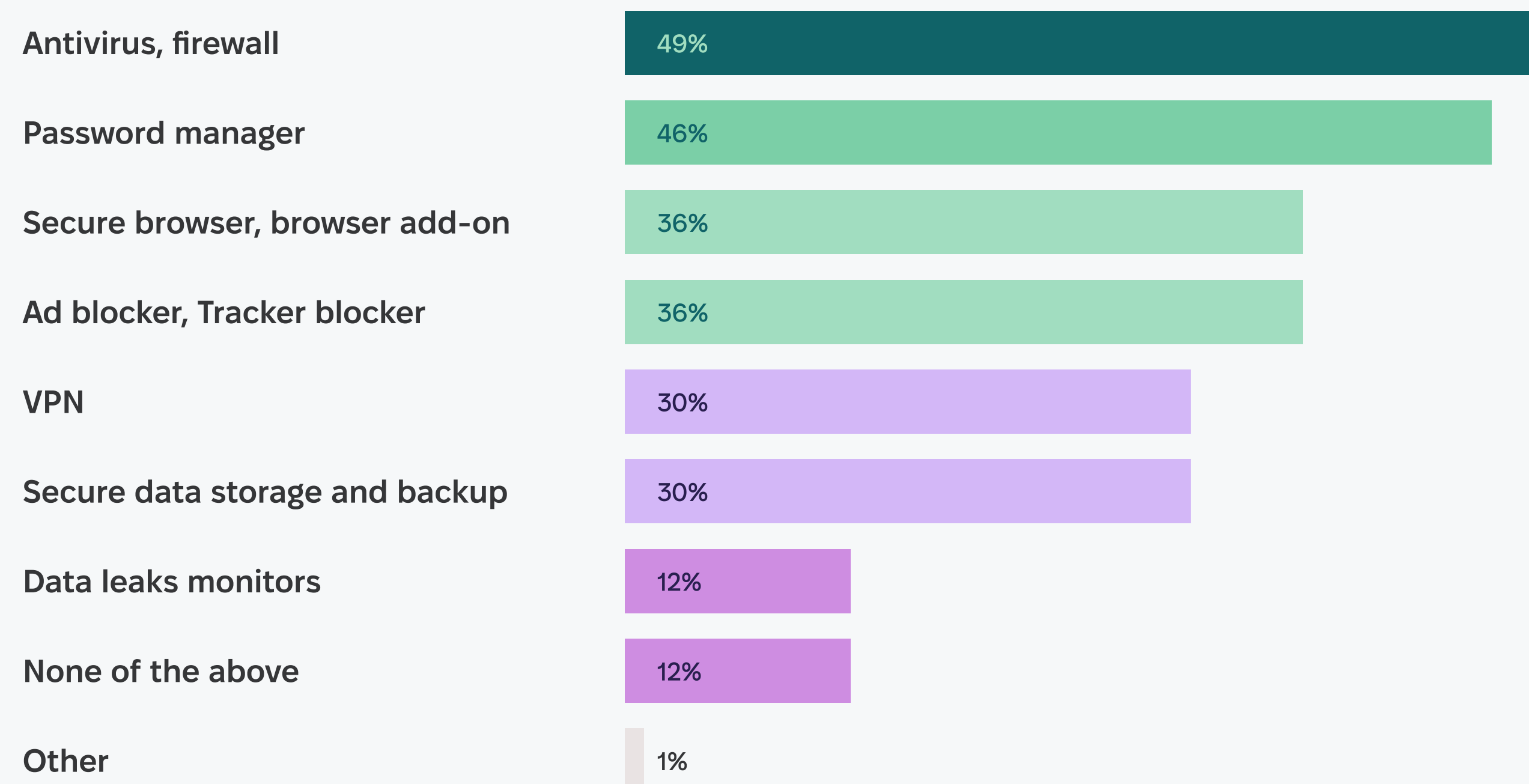
Other — 1%

✧ **Women are much more likely to say that the decision to use certain software was made not by them, but by another family member.**

✧ **Women are much less likely to use paid software compared to men.**

✧ **Software purchases are more common among people aged 25-44.**

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...But there's a catch.

Antivirus, firewall (49% ⇒ 46%)

46%

✧ 6% of antivirus **users named macOS built-in security solutions.** If those are excluded, the share of antivirus users decreases to 46%.

Password manager (46% ⇒ 41%)

41%

✧ 11% of those using a password manager **store their passwords in Google Chrome and Safari.** If those answers are excluded, the share of password manager users decreases to 41%.

Secure browser, browser add-on (36% ⇒ 23%)

23%

✧ 35% of **respondents named Safari and Google Chrome,** perceiving them as secure. If those answers are excluded, the share of secure browser users decreases to 23% and might still be overestimated.
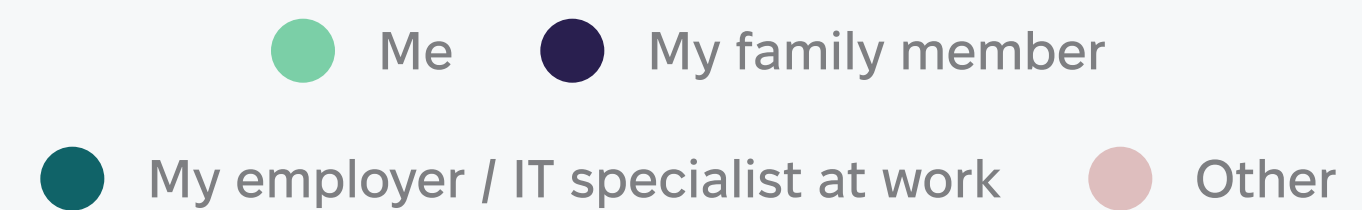
Ad blocker, Tracker blocker

?

✧ **Users confuse the product categories** of browser, browser add-on, and ad-blockers, so the share of ad-blocker/tracker blocker users is most likely overestimated.

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Antivirus / firewall
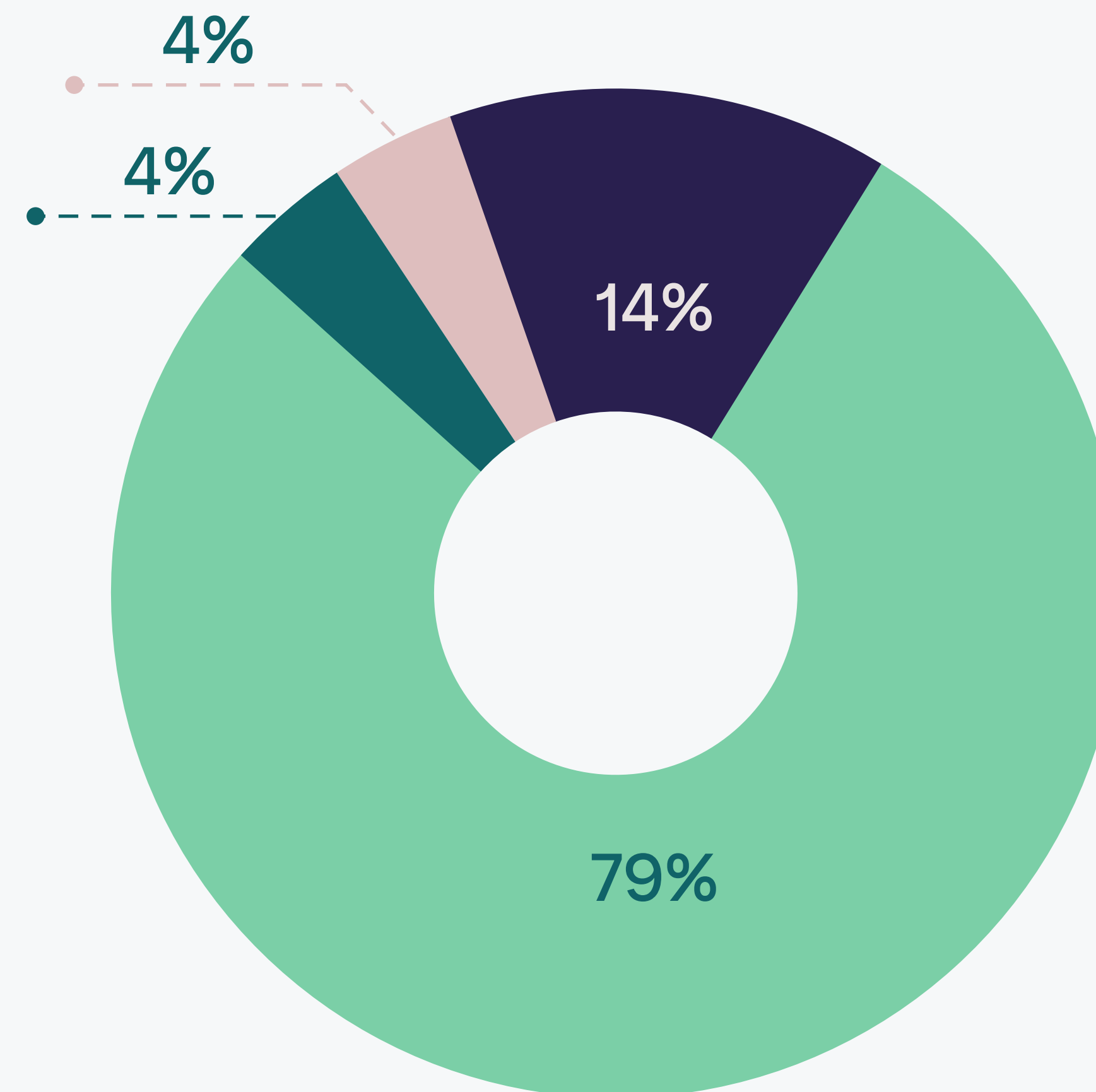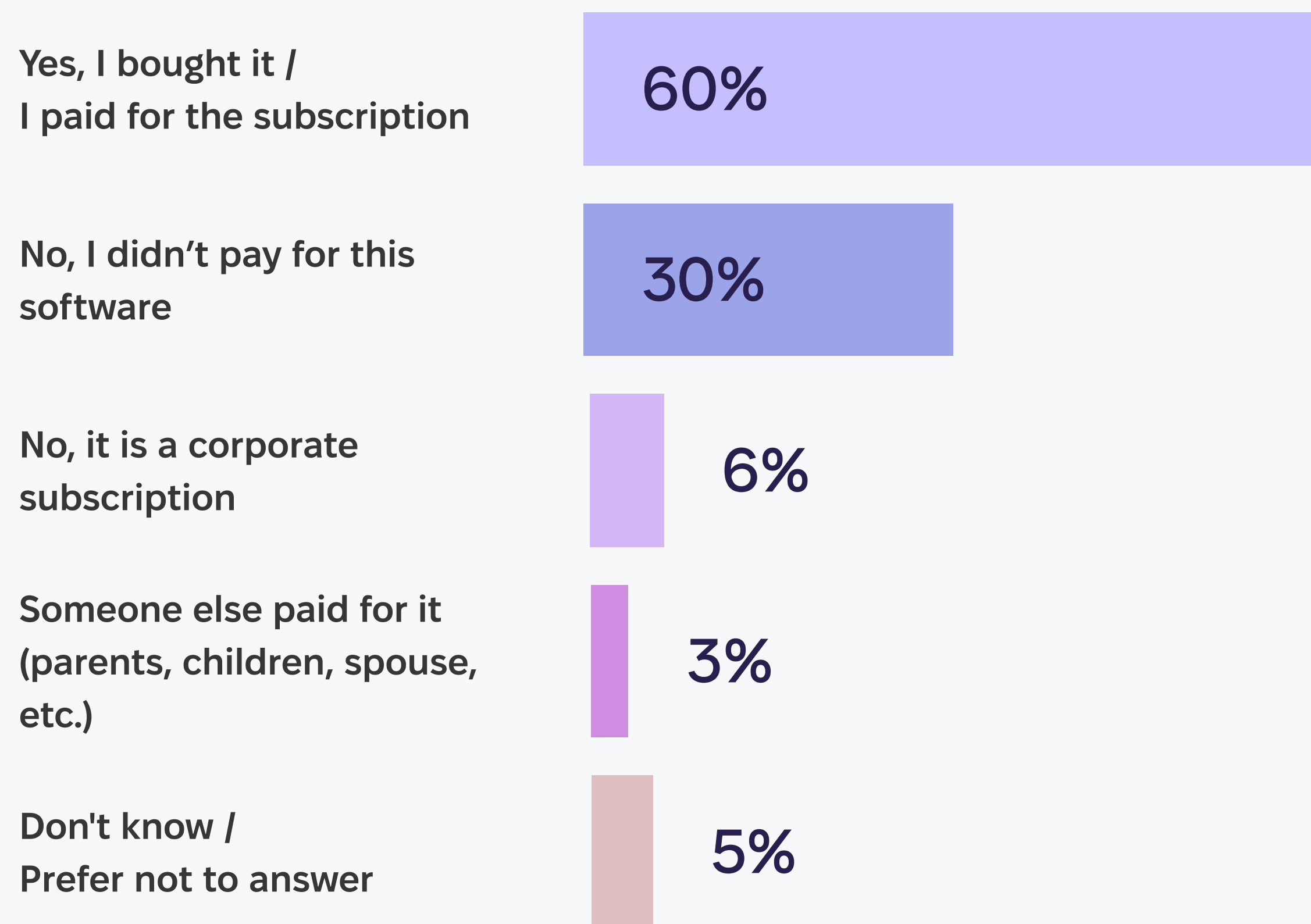
Did you pay for your antivirus / firewall?

Yes, I bought it /
I paid for the subscription **56%**

No, I didn't pay for this
software **30%**

No, it is a corporate
subscription **6%**

Someone else paid for it
(parents, children, spouse,
etc.) **5%**

Don't know /
Prefer not to answer **5%**

5%

4%

14%

77%
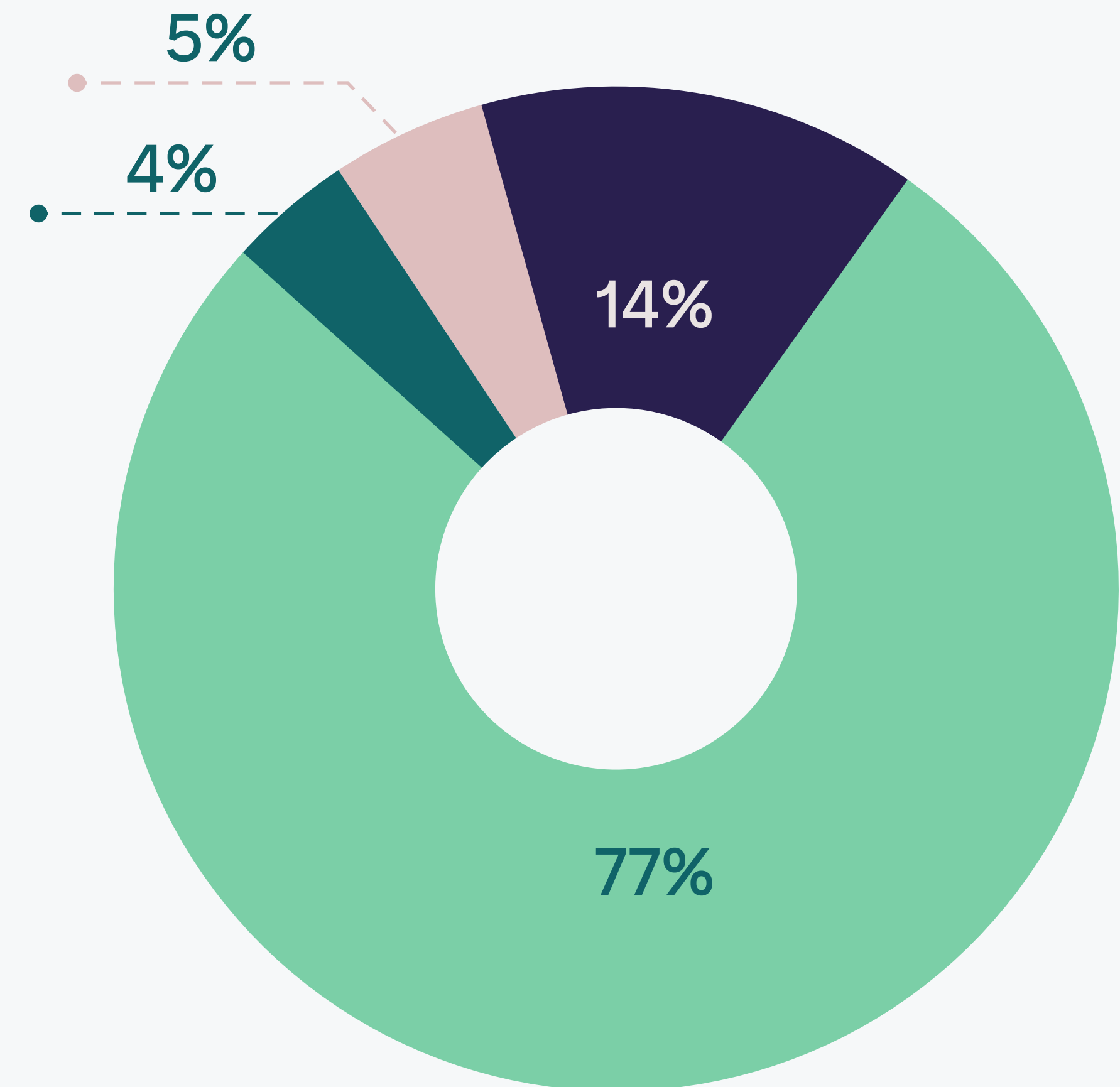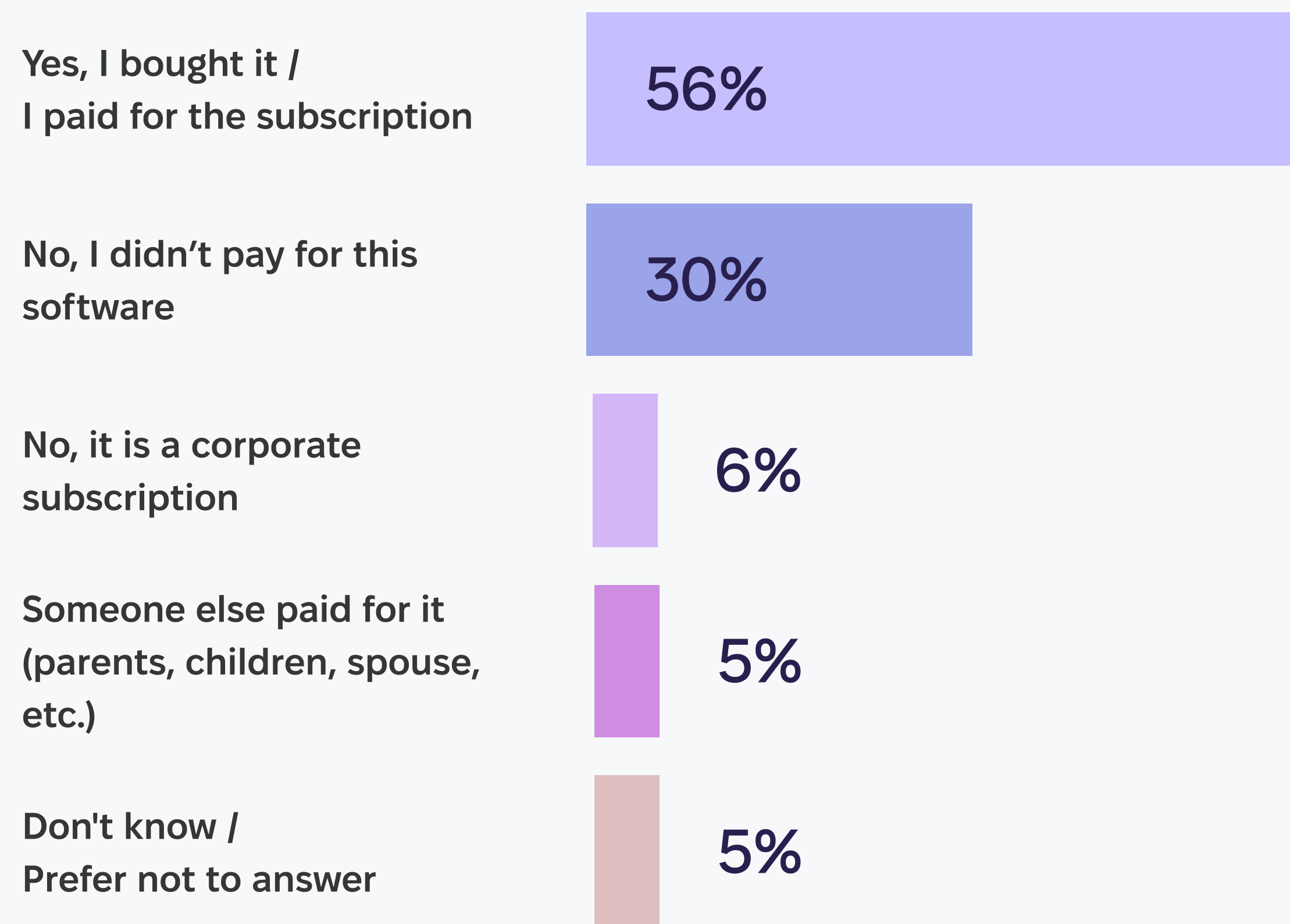
**Who made the decision that you should
use an antivirus/firewall?**

● Me   ● My family member

● My employer / IT specialist at work   ● Other

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Password manager

Did you pay for your password manager?

Yes, I bought it /
I paid for the subscription
60%

No, I didn't pay for this
software
30%

No, it is a corporate
subscription
6%

Someone else paid for it
(parents, children, spouse,
etc.)
3%

Don't know /
Prefer not to answer
5%

4%

4%

14%

79%

**Who made the decision that you should
use a password manager?**

- Me
- My family member
- My employer / IT specialist at work
- Other

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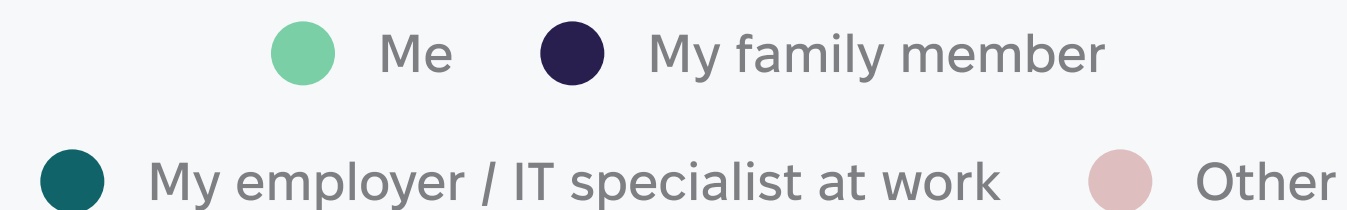
VPN

Did you pay for your VPN?

Yes, I bought it /
I paid for the subscription **54%**

No, I didn't pay for this
software **27%**

No, it is a corporate
subscription **14%**

Someone else paid for it
(parents, children, spouse,
etc.) **6%**

Don't know /
Prefer not to answer **4%**

4%

6%

14%

78%

Who made the decision that you should use a VPN?

- Me
- My family member
- My employer / IT specialist at work
- Other

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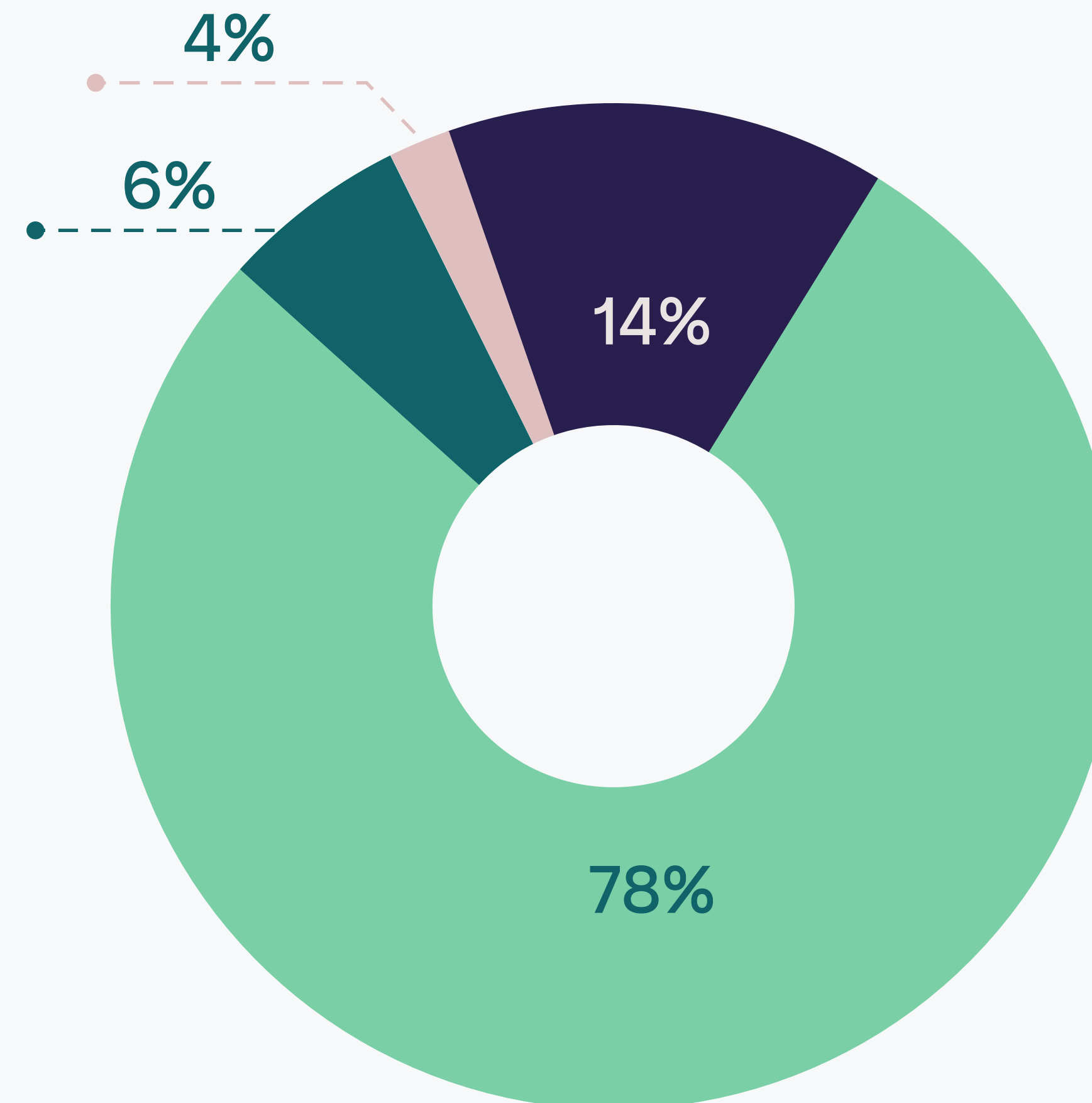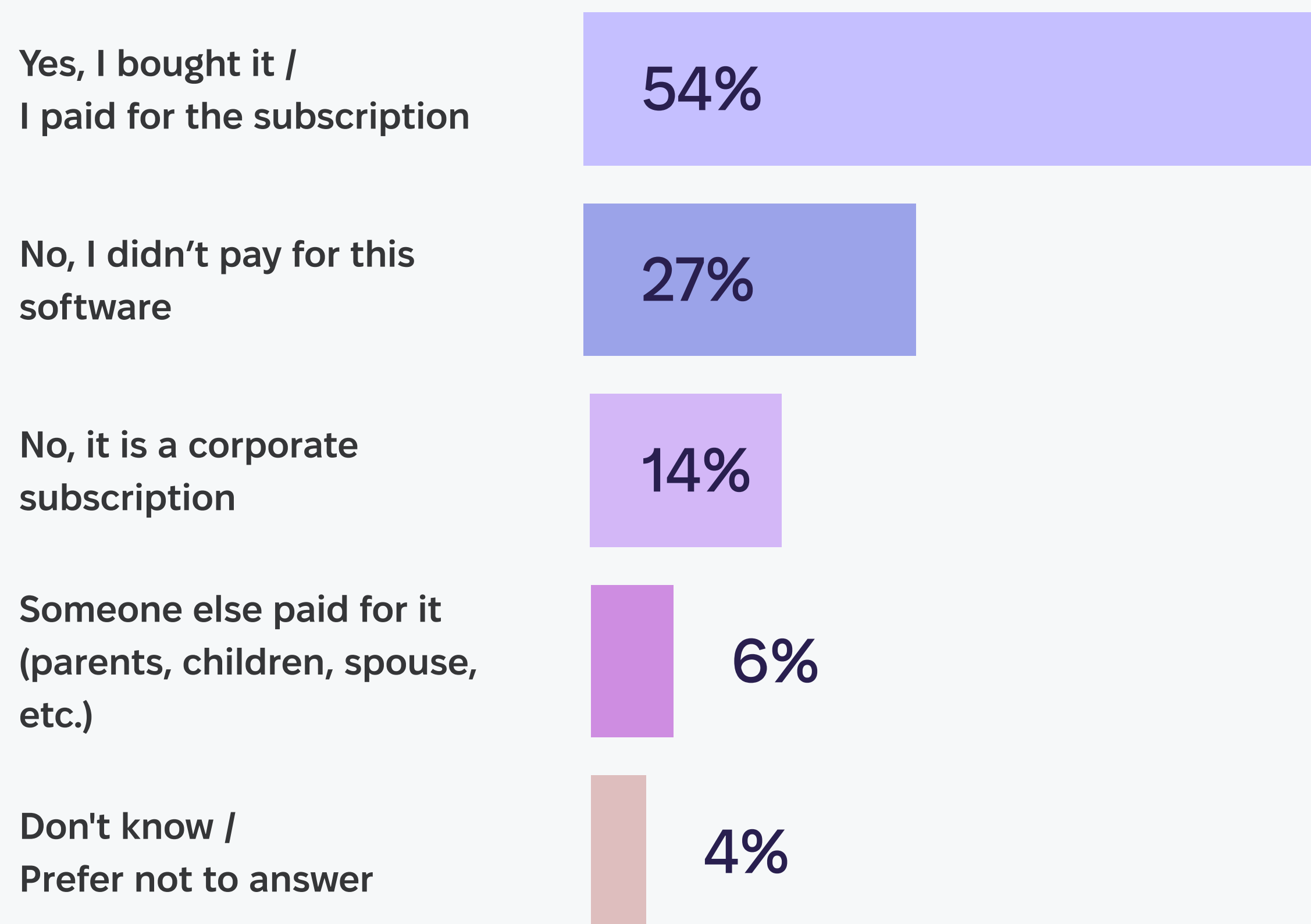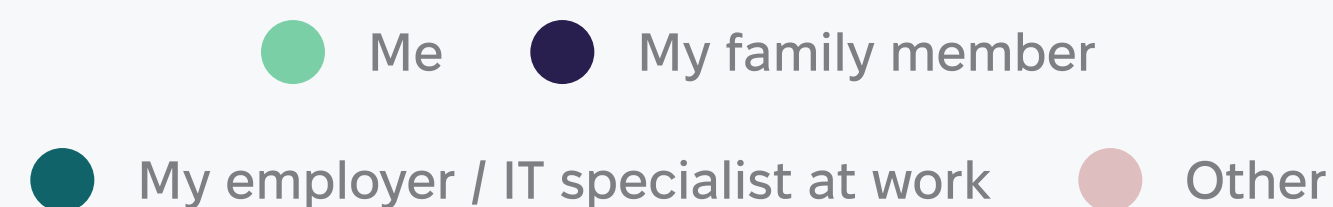
Secure data storage and backup

Did you pay for your secure data storage?

Yes, I bought it /
I paid for the subscription
54%

No, I didn't pay for this
software
32%

No, it is a corporate
subscription
7%

Someone else paid for it
(parents, children, spouse,
etc.)
5%

Don't know /
Prefer not to answer
5%

3%

5%

14%

78%
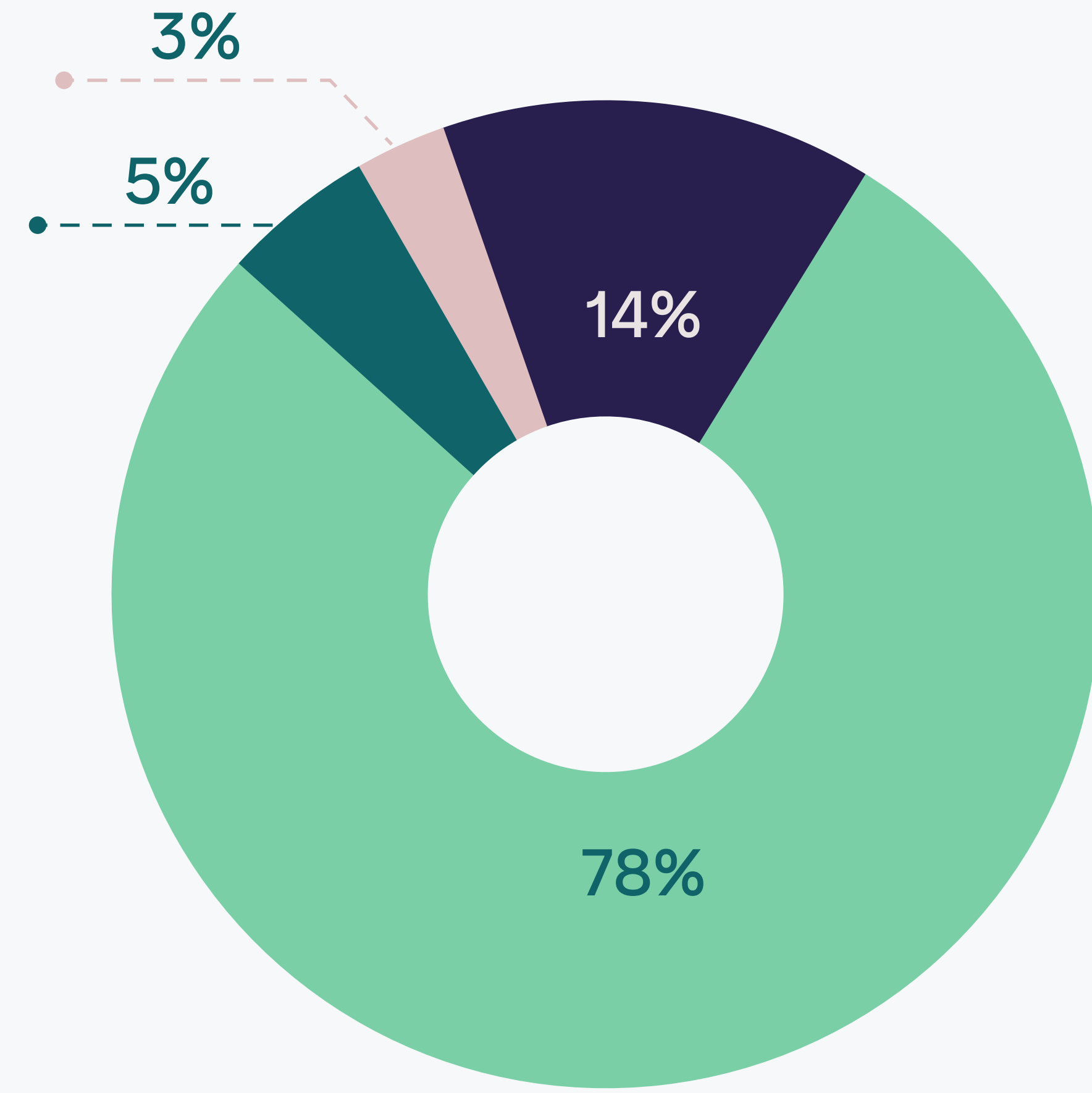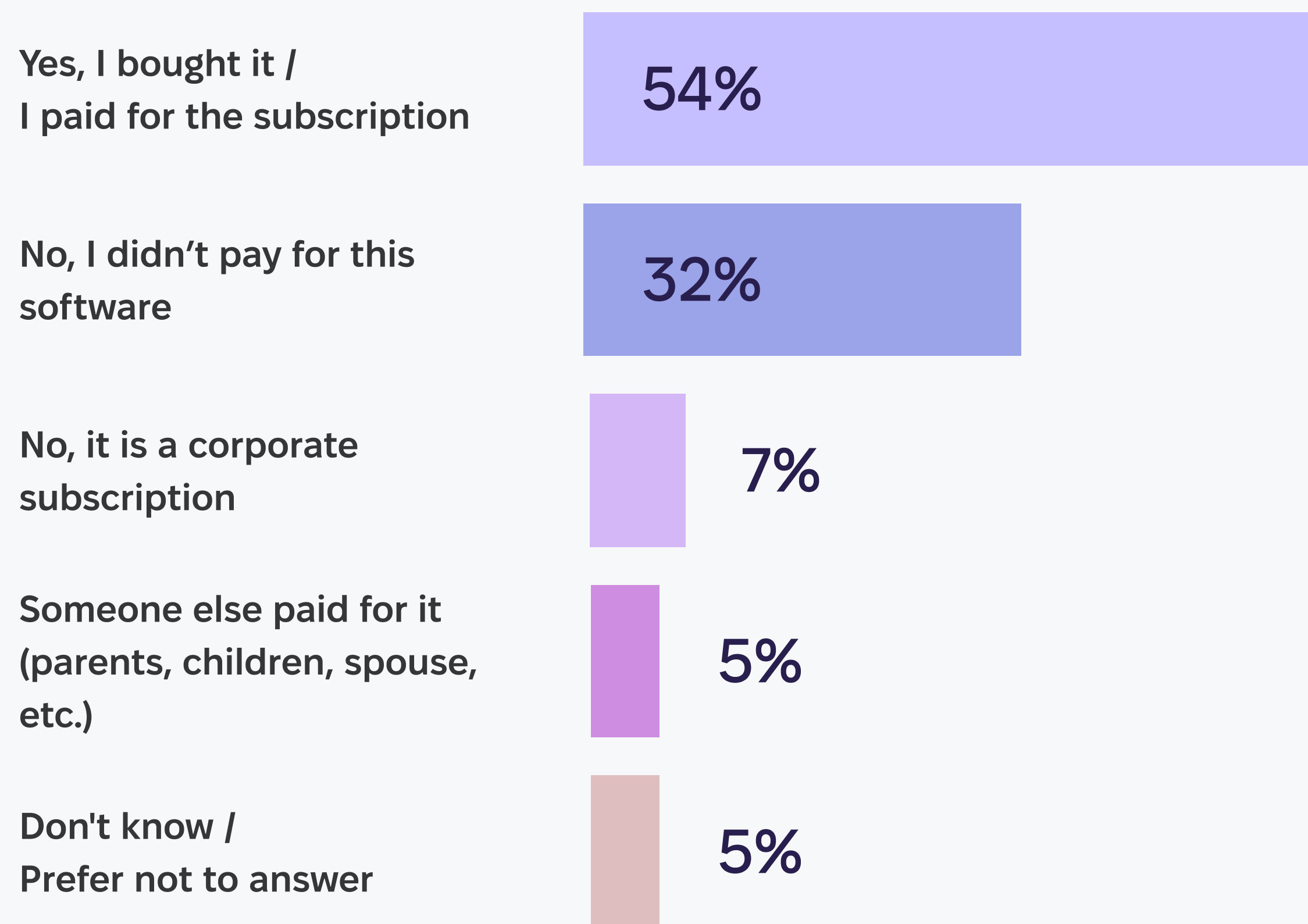
Who made the decision that you should use storage?

● Me   ● My family member

● My employer / IT specialist at work   ● Other
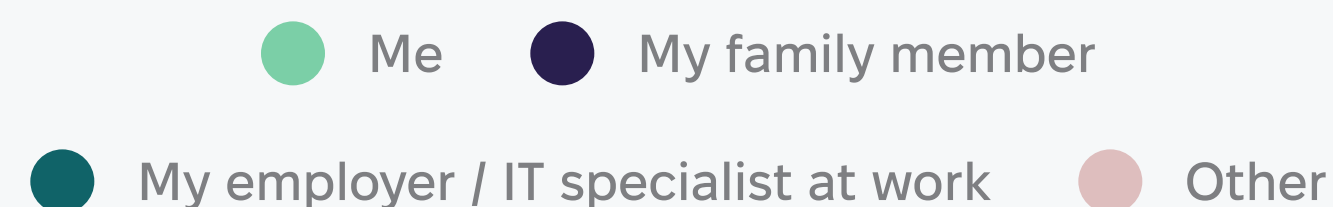
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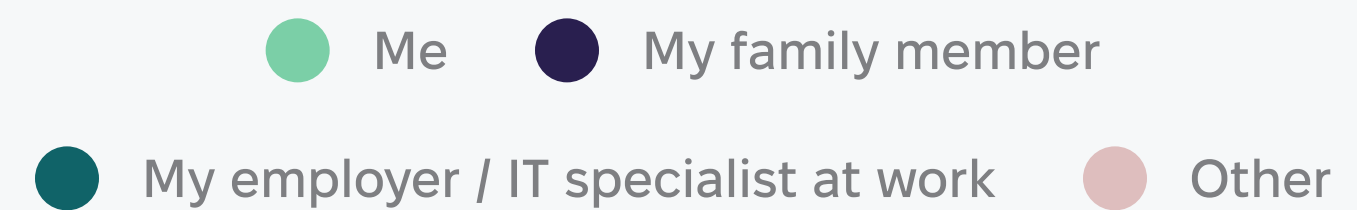
Ad blocker, tracker blocker

✧ **About 70% of users have not purchased** or do not pay for this software.

✧ Users confuse the product categories of browser, browser add-on, and ad-blocker.

4%

4%

14%

79%
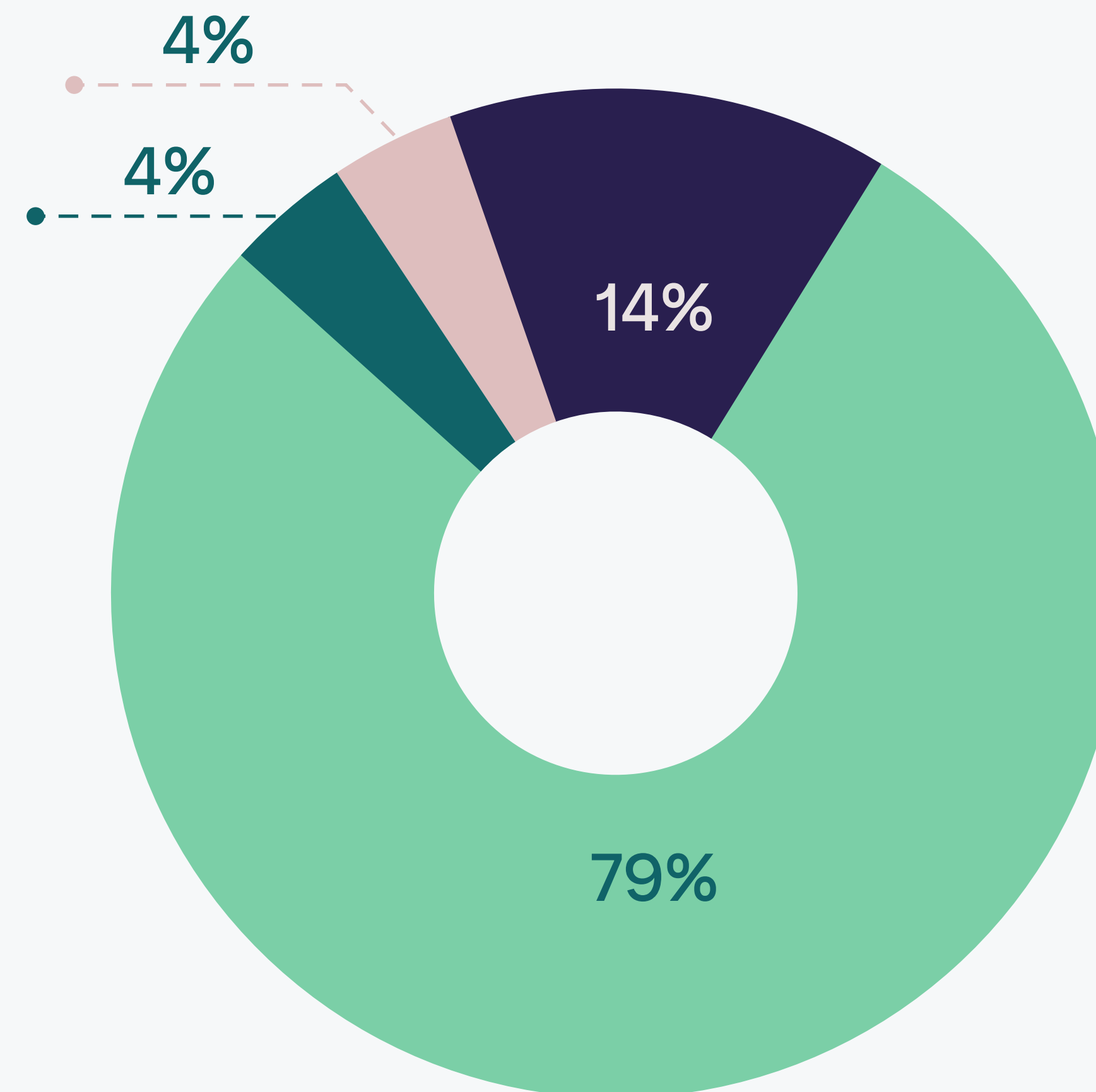
Who made the decision that you should use an ad blocker, tracker blocker?

● Me   ● My family member

● My employer / IT specialist at work   ● Other

Supporting each other

Mac users often give and receive cybersecurity advice. The advice respondents give to each other mainly focuses on practicing **cautious online behavior** and **emphasizing the importance of strong passwords.**

Commonly recommended software includes **antivirus, firewall,** and **VPN** for enhanced protection against cyber threats.

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Over 40% provide and / or receive support in avoiding cybersecurity threats.

43%

Provide support in avoiding cybersecurity threats.

- ✧ 55% in the age group 25-44
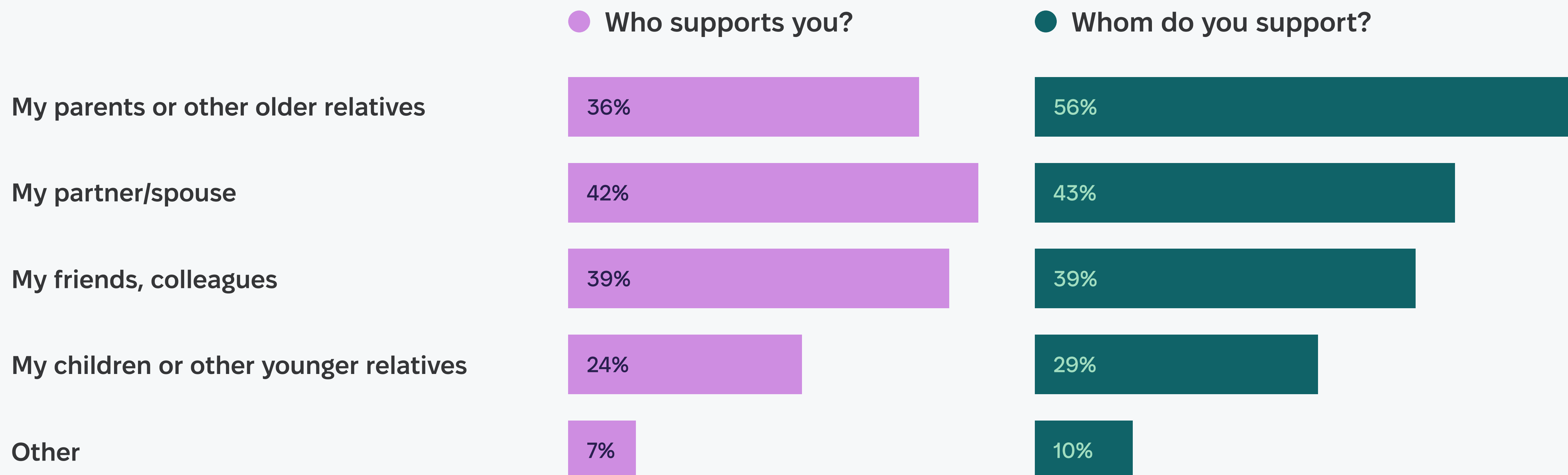- ✧ 35% among women and 55% among men

47%

Receive support in avoiding cybersecurity threats.

- ✧ 60% in the age group 25-34
- ✧ 43% among women and 52% among men

32%

Both **provide** and **receive** support in avoiding cybersecurity threats

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Those who support others mainly help their parents and older relatives. Those who receive support mainly get it from their partner, friend or colleague.

● Who supports you?   ● Whom do you support?

	Who supports you?	Whom do you support?
My parents or other older relatives	36%	56%
My partner/spouse	42%	43%
My friends, colleagues	39%	39%
My children or other younger relatives	24%	29%
Other	7%	10%

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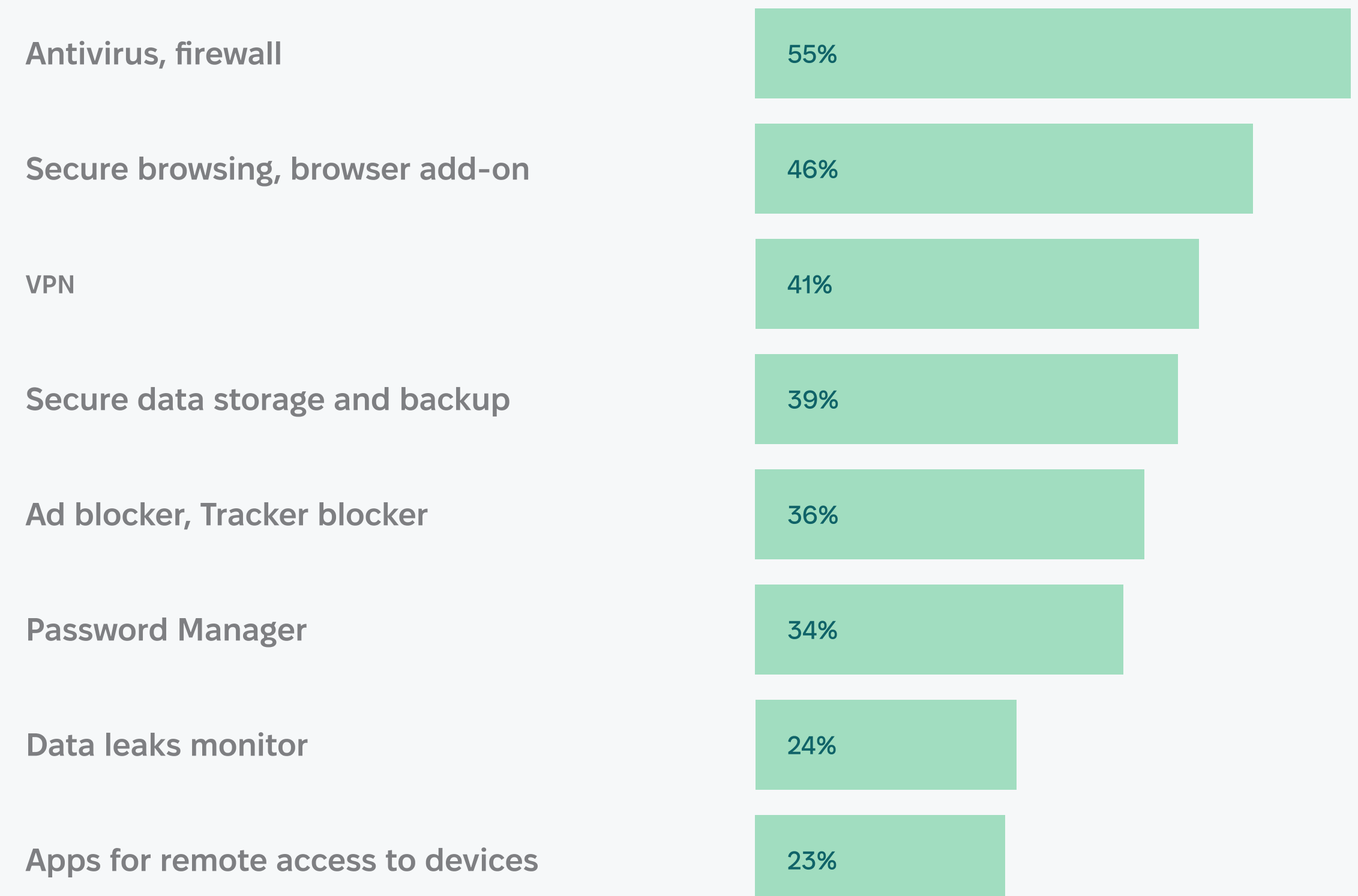# Sharing information about cyber threats is the most common way to support others. Those who recommend any kind of software mostly advise antivirus.

How do you support others in avoiding cybersecurity threats?

Share information about possible cybersecurity threats	54%
Advise on safe online behavior	41%
Answer people's questions when they have a particular problem	38%
Install or update the software on their devices	38%
Give advice on which software to install	38%
Monitor system health, do cleaning and optimization of their devices	31%
Have access to their accounts and/or receive notifications about online activities	26%

What software do you recommend?

Antivirus, firewall	55%
Secure browsing, browser add-on	46%
VPN	41%
Secure data storage and backup	39%
Ad blocker, Tracker blocker	36%
Password Manager	34%
Data leaks monitor	24%
Apps for remote access to devices	23%

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Conclusion

Brought to you by **moonlock**

Moonlock is the cybersecurity wing of MacPaw — the creators of CleanMyMac, Gemini, and other award-winning macOS utilities. We're committed to the cybersecurity needs of macOS users. Understanding their pains and concerns will help us **keep the Mac community safe.**

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Thank you for your interest!