

Identity Theft Is a Scam

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10 years ago nobody had heard of Identity Theft. Today it's the world's biggest problem. Recently the Presidential Adviser on cyber security stated:

"I fear Identity Theft more than I fear Al Qaeda."

That's a powerful statement, and Identity Theft is a serious problem, but there are simple measures anybody can do to protect themselves. Just remember the word SCAM.

S- Be STINGY about giving out your personal information to others unless you have a reason to trust them, regardless of where you are. This doesn't mean that you can't do business online, as a matter of fact, some ID Theft experts now advise us that online ordering at secure websites is safer than filling out a paper application. Why? Because the paper application becomes a permanent tangible record that is going to pass through several hands and then be stored somewhere, usually for a long period of time. It doesn't take much for a clerk or dishonest employee to take home a box of paper records and commit Identity Theft.

If you do order products online, make sure the company is reputable, and that they use a secure server. Look for "https://" in the address bar (the "s" in the end stands for secure). Regular, insecure servers simply start with http://nameofwebsite.com.

C- CHECK your financial information regularly. Most people are much too casual in their personal monitoring efforts, sometimes not even checking credit card statements. Did you know that savvy ID Thieves will often put a small purchase of just a few dollars on a credit card, just to see if it goes through, before running major purchases? Don't ignore unknown small charges on your credit or bank statement. They could mark the beginning of a case of Identity Theft, which could result in months, or even years of trouble and headache for you.

A- ASK periodically for a copy of your credit report, and put a credit monitoring service in place. Credit reports are available free from the three major credit bureaus, and monitoring is now dirt cheap. For a copy of your credit report call: a. Experian: 1-888-397-3742 b. Equifax: 1-800-525-6285 c. TransUnion 1-800-680-7289 Credit Monitoring is usually \$9.95 a month per person through a financial institution. Identity Theft protection services through a third party usually include monitoring, and also cover you from most or all Identity Theft incidents, and are comparable in price to monitoring only. Just make sure they actually cover your Identity, and not just your credit.

M- MAINTAIN careful records of your banking and financial accounts. You never know when you may be called on to produce proof of financial transactions. Of course, keep these records in a secure place!

So there you go: the SCAM method of protecting yourself from Identity Theft. But here's the kicker, act right now! These are four things that are simple to do, but they are also simple not to do, so take the time right away and put these protections in place, because your information is already out there, and can easily be purchased or found on the internet. You only have one name, isn't it worth protecting?

Copyright 2006 Dave Sherwin Dave Sherwin is a full time Marketer and Identity Theft protection expert. ID Theft protection services are the number 2 opportunity according to Entrepreneur Magazine December 2005 "Hot List". To learn more: <http://theultimatecrime.com/daves>