

Identity Theft



What is ID Theft?

- ◆ Someone obtains, and illegally uses your personal information to
 - ◆ open new credit accounts
 - ◆ use current credit accounts
 - ◆ drain your bank accounts
 - ◆ apply for loans, etc.

- ◆ Medical care



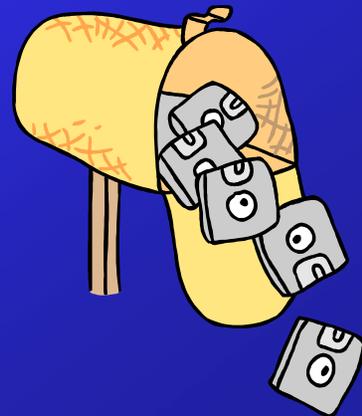
What Does an ID Thief Need?

- ◆ Name
- ◆ Social Security number
- ◆ Birthdate
- ◆ Address
- ◆ Phone number
- ◆ Mother's maiden name (maybe)



How Does an ID Thief Get Info?

- ◆ Stealing wallets/purses to obtain SS#, ID, account numbers
- ◆ Stealing mail to obtain bank and credit card info, pre-approved credit offers, tax information, new checks, etc.
- ◆ Dumpster Diving



How Does an ID Thief Get Info?

- ◆ Changing your address – diverting bills and statements
- ◆ Browsing genealogy sites on net
- ◆ Buying your info from “brokers”
- ◆ Phishing on the Internet / e-mail
- ◆ Skimming – stealing credit card numbers



What Do ID Thieves Do?

- ◆ Get phone/wireless service in your name
- ◆ Open credit card accounts using your name
- ◆ Get loans or services in your name
- ◆ Make withdrawals from your account
- ◆ Make charges on a current account
- ◆ Write checks from your account



Warning Signs of Identity Theft

- ◆ Monthly bills or statements don't arrive
- ◆ Unfamiliar charges on bills
- ◆ Denied credit for unknown reasons
- ◆ Collection notices or bills from companies you don't do business with
- ◆ Calls from collection agencies on accounts you have not opened



Why should I worry about ID Theft?

- ◆ **\$800 - \$1400 average cost**
- ◆ **Two years average to clean up**
- ◆ **Finding it in less than five months**
- ◆ **Impact**
 - ◆ **loans**
 - ◆ **insurance**
 - ◆ **jobs**



Minimize Risk – Protect Yourself

- ◆ Treat your SSN like a PIN
- ◆ Pay attention to billing and statement cycles
- ◆ Guard both incoming and outgoing mail
- ◆ Shred pre-approved offers, old bills and bank statements, credit card checks, etc.
- ◆ Keep all personal information out of sight



- ◆ Be hardnosed about personal info
- ◆ Order a copy of your credit report annually or every six-months
- ◆ Copy all cards in your wallet, front and back. Keep in a safe place!
- ◆ Check your monthly statements
- ◆ Request all companies remove your SS# as ID number!
- ◆ Do not use mother's maiden name as password



If you become a victim

- ◆ Keep good records – all in writing
- ◆ Notify all creditors
- ◆ Close suspect accounts
- ◆ File a police report
- ◆ File a report with the FTC
- ◆ Contact credit bureaus
- ◆ Place fraud alert on credit reports
- ◆ Contact other agencies

