

# New alliance to study and combat ID theft

July 1 2006

---

A dramatic increase in the number of investigations into identity theft and fraud over the past few years has sparked a partnership between law enforcement, government, the corporate world and academia.

The new Center for Identity Management and Information Protection (CIMP) at Utica College will be the physical arm of this partnership, supplying research on trends in fraud and methods for fraud prevention for partners Lexis Nexis, IBM, the United States Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The center will also aim to drive policy, regulatory, and legislative decisions.

Indiana University, Syracuse University and Carnegie Mellon University, which all have programs for the study of economic crime, have been named academic partners with CIMP.

A lack of information exchange and coordination between law enforcement and those who research identity theft has hampered progress in this area in the past, said Gary Gordon, the executive director of Utica's Economic Crime Institute. Since 2003 Gordon and his colleagues have authored three white papers recommending ways to prevent identity theft and fraud that he feels have not been sufficiently heeded by authorities.

With the creation of the center, freer information exchange will enhance researchers' understanding of what is happening on the ground and provide law enforcement with feedback on how to update training and prevention methods. One of the center's first projects will be a direct

assessment of the trends in recent law-enforcement cases of identity theft and fraud, using official reports that will be made available through government partnership.

Brian Nagel, deputy director of the Secret Service, expressed the need for a more coordinated effort.

"Law enforcement alone is not accurately equipped to address all the developing technologies used by such criminals," said Nagel. "Our partnership with industry and academia has demonstrated that our combined assets are an integral part of that solution. The present speed at which our adversaries change their methods and tactics means we need a unified approach in order to be successful."

A white paper published this month by the Economic Crime Institute and Lexis Nexis singles out identity fraud as a crime that is insufficiently tracked by annual reports from government and private organizations. Neither the FBI's annual report on domestic crime nor the Department of Justice's National Instance-Based Reporting System collects information on identity fraud, though identity theft is tracked. While identity theft is the false assumption of someone's identity, identity fraud uses a composite of identities built on personal info from several individuals or the creation of a totally fictitious identity developed over a number of years. The lack of data on identity fraud is particularly troubling, Gordon said, because once an individual has gained security clearance to an area using a fictitious ID, all of the criminal's further action would be read by security technology as legitimate.

"(Identity fraud) we find more insidious and more threatening because there is no victim involved, and no one is going to report that their ID has been stolen," Gordon said. "This whole idea of identity really permeates commerce, risk management issues, and national security."

According to the Federal Trade Commission's victim complaint data for 2005, the main complaint on financial crime was from individuals who suspect they have been victims of identity theft. Since 2003 the number of complaints of identity theft has risen by 40,000. If a thief decides to use the stolen personal information, the FTC reports, it is most often in credit-card fraud, and adults ages 18 to 29 are the most commonly victimized group.

*Copyright 2006 by United Press International*

Citation: New alliance to study and combat ID theft (2006, July 1) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-07-alliance-combat-id-theft.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.