

GO FIGURE

A look at personal finance trends and what they mean to you

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Money

Guard your identity – for a price.

President Bush's Identity Theft Task Force on Tuesday introduced interim recommendations to help address the growing problem, including issuing guidelines on how to notify consumers of data breaches; tighter restrictions on Social Security numbers; and a "universal police report" to aid victims in recovering from identity theft.

WHAT TO DO: Companies are providing new services for people who are worried about identity theft. Credit-reporting bureaus will monitor all three credit files, for about \$13 a month. For \$7.95 a month, TrustedID helps consumers in 22 states "freeze" their credit files. For residents of states without freeze laws, LifeLock will place fraud alerts on consumers' credit files and will attempt to remedy any fraud that occurs on the company's watch for \$10 a month. CardCops alerts consumers about stolen data it finds online for \$24.95 a year. For \$4.95 a month, IdentitySweep scans public databases and alerts consumers to possible fraud. You can do these things for free, but if you don't have the time these service may be right for you.

-By [Terri Cullen](#), 9/19/06

How Thieves Access Your Identity

Lost or stolen wallets, checkbooks and credit cards account for the bulk of identity fraud, according to a 2006 survey.

How data were stolen	% of cases
Lost or stolen wallets, checkbooks and credit cards	30%
By someone you know	15%
Corrupt business employee	15%
Stolen mail or fraudulent change of address	8%
Offline financial-transaction	7%
Data breaches	6%
Computer viruses, spyware or hackers	5%
Phishing	3%
Garbage	1%
Online financial transaction	0.3%
Some other way	7%

Source: [Javelin Strategy & Research](#)

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