

## **Identity Theft: Retail Store Data Breach Affects Millions of Consumers, Including a Widely Quoted Identity Theft Expert and Speaker on Personal Security**

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(BOSTON, Mass. - April 17, 2007 - IDTheftSecurity.com) Market analysts have predicted that the massive theft of customers' financial data at TJX Cos. may cost billions. The data breach has claimed millions of victims, including Robert Siciliano, a widely televised and quoted personal security and identity theft expert. Promptly refuting related, fraudulent charges to his bank account and taking swift action to halt the criminals' ability to use his credit cards, he urged all consumers who have shopped at the many affected stores to monitor their financial information closely.

"I am a victim of this data breach," said Siciliano. "My credit card information was among the many records these thieves obtained. No single consumer can prevent credit card fraud. It's impossible. But I'm fine with being a victim, and I caught the foul play by watching my account, just as I advise all my clients to do with theirs."

CEO of IDTheftSecurity.com, Siciliano leads Fortune 500 companies and their clients in workshops that explore consumer education solutions for security issues. On its Web site, the Privacy Learning Institute has featured Siciliano, a longtime identity theft speaker. Author of "The Safety Minute: 01," He has discussed identity theft and data security on CNBC, on NBC's "Today Show," FOX News, and elsewhere.

Upon receipt of his bank and credit card statements each month, Siciliano always scrutinizes every charge. In doing so with his latest statements, he immediately recognized unauthorized charges, telltale signs that fraudsters had gained access to his finances, and promptly refuted them.

"Shortly after I cancelled my card, I received a new one," said Siciliano. "These are steps that many consumers, at their own peril, may not be taking."

Recent news has suggested that consumers indeed are not taking advantage of tools that might protect their financial information. An article in Network World reported on April 10 that fewer than 10 percent of the approximately 163,000 consumers affected by the ChoicePoint data breach in 2005 used the free credit monitoring, credit reports, and identity-theft insurance the company offered.

Data breaches can be costly to a company that experiences them. Findings from Forrester Research reported in InformationWeek on April 11 have pegged the cost of an average data breach at anywhere from \$90 to \$305 for each compromised record. An article that ran in the Boston Globe on April 12 quoted technology analysts from Enterprise Strategy Group and elsewhere saying the TJX breach, which news reports have said exposed 45.7 million credit card numbers to potential fraud, could cost the retailer up to \$1 billion.

"Data breaches are costly, plain and simple," concluded Siciliano. "Whether the potential financial hit from a data breach seems manageable, the potential loss of customer loyalty is never worth the gamble. Companies and consumers are actors in a symbiotic relationship, after all; they depend on one another. But companies depend on consumers more than the other way around."

About IDTheftSecurity.com

Identity theft affects us all, which is why Robert Siciliano, CEO of IDTheftSecurity.com, makes it his mission to provide consumer education solutions on identity theft to Fortune 500 companies and their clients. A leader of personal safety and security seminars nationwide, Siciliano has been featured on CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, "The Suze Orman Show," "ABC

News with Sam Donaldson," "The Montel Williams Show," "Maury Povich," "Sally Jesse Raphael," and "The Howard Stern Show."

Visit Siciliano's Web site, [www.IDTheftSecurity.com](http://www.IDTheftSecurity.com); blog, [www.realtysecurity.com/blog](http://www.realtysecurity.com/blog); and YouTube page, [youtube.com/stungundotcom](http://youtube.com/stungundotcom).

The media are encouraged to get in touch with Siciliano directly:

Robert Siciliano  
Personal Security Expert  
PHONE: 888-SICILIANO (742-4542)  
FAX: 877-2-FAX-NOW (232-9669)  
[Robert@IDTheftSecurity.com](mailto:Robert@IDTheftSecurity.com)  
[www.idtheftsecurity.com](http://www.idtheftsecurity.com)

The media may also contact:

Brent W. Skinner, President  
STETrevisions  
PHONE: 617-875-4859  
FAX: 866-663-6557  
[BrentSkinner@STETrevisions.biz](mailto:BrentSkinner@STETrevisions.biz)  
[www.STETrevisions.biz](http://www.STETrevisions.biz)

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