

Federal Government Web Site Vulnerabilities Revealed in Recent News Reports Lay Bare the Sad State of Data Security

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(BOSTON, Mass. – Jan. 17, 2006 - IDTheftSecurity.com) According to Robert Siciliano, president of IDTheftSecurity.com, security vulnerabilities that recent reports have revealed about federal government Web sites are unacceptable. He says the news, combined with ongoing corporate greed and negligence, bodes ill for the state of data security in a computer environment teeming with identity thieves.

“Negligence and ignorance, not to mention greed on the part of industry, are horrible excuses for identity theft,” said Siciliano, an expert who presents identity theft workshops to Fortune 500 companies nationwide. “We are seeing outrageous, unnecessary levels of incompetence and inattention.”

On Jan. 13, The New York Times reported a security hole discovered at the General Services Administration (GSA). Government contractors’ financial information was found to be viewable and modifiable at the GSA’s Web site. The story followed news last week in Wall Street & Technology reporting Social Security numbers had been displayed at the U.S. Department of Justice’s Web site.

“The rampant, out-of-control use of the Social Security number as a primary identifier and multipurpose account ID is unnecessary,” said Siciliano. “The situation these practices breed makes the identity thief’s job easy.”

Author of "The Safety Minute: 01" and an upcoming book, "Identity Theft Pandemic: Curing the Identity Theft Virus," Siciliano provides consumer education solutions to Fortune 500 companies and their clients. Siciliano has appeared on CNBC’s “On the Money” multiple times over the past two weeks to discuss identity theft.

A recent article in Bankrate.com titled “Hijacking your Social Security number” provides a history explaining how the Social Security number has evolved to become a universal, all-purpose identifier. According to the Wall Street & Technology report, the Privacy Act aims to block the kind of Social Security number breach seen at the DOJ’s site but “is frustratingly fuzzy and comes with a dozen exceptions.”

“Obviously,” Siciliano said, “the Privacy Act is often misinterpreted or not enforced. If we want to stop identity theft, we need to make sense and use common sense. We need to make our own rules and tactics clear-cut.”

“We have no choice but to give large organizations our personal identifying and financial information,” Siciliano concluded. “In return, the least that government and industry could do is to safeguard our information. And yet, despite all the high-profile breaches we’ve seen, we also see a continuing failure to implement simple measures that would curb the problem.”

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Identity theft affects us all, which is why Robert Siciliano, president 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.”

The media may reach Siciliano at 1 (888) SICILIANO (742-4542). Visit his Web site, www.IDTheftSecurity.com, or his blog, www.IDTheftSecurity.blogspot.com. Siciliano’s full contact information follows:

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