

Security Expert Says Identity Theft on Youth-Oriented Online Communities Is a Wake-up Call for the Industry

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(BOSTON, Mass. – Feb. 6, 2006 - IDTheftSecurity.com) The Christian Science Monitor reported on Jan. 30 that young people are increasingly becoming a prime target for identity theft. Other reports have linked identity thieves with popular sites such as MySpace.com and Facebook.com. According to Robert Siciliano, president of IDTheftSecurity.com, the news gives those who run online communities geared primarily for youth a prime opportunity to beef up their security.

“We give lip service to the notion of protecting our children from danger,” said Siciliano, an expert who presents identity theft workshops to Fortune 500 companies nationwide. “Teeming online youth communities can be great outlets for creativity and social growth. Let’s not allow these sites to become great outlets for identity thieves, too, who want to hide behind these benefits.”

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 in January to discuss identity theft.

According to the Christian Science Monitor article, US Federal Trade Commission logs are suggesting a steady rise in identity theft against young people. Other articles in student-run college publications—such as a Jan. 25 report in The Daily Colonial and a Jan. 30 story in The Dakota Student—have specifically shed a light on the dangers of identity theft for people who use sites such as MySpace and Facebook. Users tend to give little thought to posting large amounts of personal information.

“Young people have grown up with the Internet and trust it, especially when a site is well-known,” said Siciliano. “Juxtapose this with the common denominator among nearly all online identity theft scares this past year: careless posting of sensitive information to the Web. You have a recipe for disaster. It’s just one more reason why we shouldn’t be surprised at all that youth are a prime target of identity thieves.”

And the carelessness again extended beyond the Internet. The Associated Press reported on Feb. 1 that issues of The Boston Globe and the Worcester Telegram & Gazette arrived at subscribers’ homes that day with credit card numbers and other sensitive information inadvertently included on home address stickers.

“Protection against identity theft and online predators doesn’t have to be complicated,” said Siciliano. “It doesn’t even have to cramp anyone’s style all that much. But we do need to pay attention.”

Concluded Siciliano, “Leadership and a sense of responsibility from industry will help us to meet these growing challenges. Legislative responsiveness wouldn’t hurt, either. And commonsense behavior on the part of consumers is always critical.”

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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.”

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