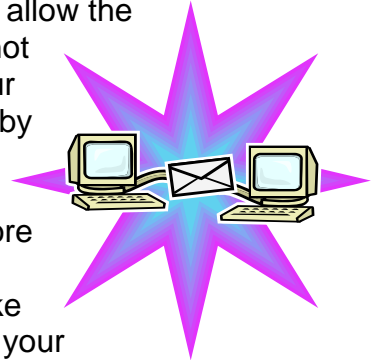


Self Defense Against Identity Theft

Part Three: Computers and Foiling Identity Thieves Away From Home

Over the past few years the number of people using the internet to conduct business, make purchases, and pay bills has skyrocketed. Unfortunately, so has the number of people looking to steal your information online. The following are tips to protect yourself.

Do not store personal information on your computer or PDA. If you shop online, make sure that the site uses an encryption system to transfer your personal data, and do not allow the site to store your credit card information. If you receive unwanted email, do not open or respond to it. Make sure the passwords you use are not obvious, your birthdate, spouse's name, or mother's maiden name could be easily cracked by a hacker.



When you are away from home, use bank ATMS rather than convenience store ATMS. Convenience store machines may not have the same security protection. When you've completed your transaction always remember to take your ATM receipt with you. Do not carry your social security card with you, if your purse or wallet is stolen, a thief would have all they need to establish an identity in your name.



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