

## **Identity Crime**

Identity crime is a burgeoning international phenomenon that if left unchecked, may ultimately threaten national security, global commerce & the welfare of society. There is limited consensus amongst law enforcement agencies and their counterparts regarding the magnitude of "identity crime" and it is widely acknowledged to be one of the fastest growing crimes worldwide, as well as ever changing. Identity criminals continuously develop new & more sophisticated ways of stealing the identity of innocent victims.

One of the main reasons for the increased incidence of identity crime is the rapid growth of information technology, which has resulted in "identity theft" expanding to encompass a much broader range of identification-based crimes. Identity crime is moving away from opportunistic criminals to professional and sophisticated fraud syndicates that are able to operate on an international scale using IT technology, more particularly the Internet. Conversely, whilst technological advances have allowed criminals to perpetuate identity crime, the use of simple pen-and-paper to falsify vehicle registrations, identity documents, driver's licenses and the like are equally prevalent.

The sophistication and constantly evolving nature of identity crime has made it almost impossible to quantify or to police. Individuals, banks, merchants, credit bureau and law enforcement agencies all have a responsibility to identify, evaluate and monitor the various permutations and root causes of identity crime. Moreover, measures need to be taken to prevent identity crime and to safeguard personal information, be that their own, that of their clients or other victims.

Whilst it is indisputable that there is a need for information-based identity authentication, it is also essential that the problem of identity crime be managed. Fundamental privacy rights must be balanced with the need for personal information in identity authentication applications. A national & global strategy is imperative in order to combat identity crime.

This newsletter has been supplied courtesy of CGF Research Institute (Pty) Ltd, a strategic associate of BarrySpitz.Com World Services.

A PowerPoint report covering this topic can be purchased through CGF at [www.cgf.co.za](http://www.cgf.co.za)

---