



The UK's Fraud Prevention Service

Press Release

October 2009

The Anonymous Attacker: CIFAS releases Special Report into identity fraud and account takeover fraud

CIFAS – the UK's Fraud Prevention Service, in collaboration with a number of private and public sector bodies has released a report entitled **The Anonymous Attacker** today at the beginning of **National Identity Fraud Prevention Week**. The Anonymous Attacker combines research, statistics, maps, prevention tips, case studies, and opinion pieces on how consumers and businesses are affected by the twin threats of identity fraud and account takeover fraud.

[A copy of the report can be found by clicking here.](#)

Statistics prove the worrying scale of fraud in the UK today

In times of economic trouble, the worrying news is that identity fraud (the use of a stolen or false identity to obtain goods or services by deception) and account takeover (when a third party hijacks a victim's existing accounts) are increasing at a shocking rate.

Key findings outlined in the report include:

- Over 59,000 victims of impersonation have been recorded in the first 9 months of 2009 – an alarming 36% increase from the same period in 2008
- The overall number of identity frauds has increased by 33% in the first 9 months of 2009 from 2008
- Account takeovers have risen by 23% in 2009 when compared with the same period in 2008 – and by a staggering 238% in the last 24 months
- More than 1 in 2 account takeovers have targeted victims' plastic card (i.e. credit card) accounts
- Mobile phone account takeovers have already more than doubled in 2009, from 2008 levels
- The South East London (SE) and Birmingham (B) postcode areas are the fraud hotspots for both identity fraud and account takeover – while, more surprisingly, Guildford (GU) and Reading (RG) both appear in the top ten fraud hotspots for both types of fraud.

Other key content

The Anonymous Attacker also features key content which explains the scale of identity fraud and account takeover fraud, together with key preventative measures, such as:

- A series of fraud maps – the result of a collaboration between CIFAS and Ordnance Survey – revealing the London Borough and National distribution of fraud victims
- Tips on how consumers can protect themselves against identity fraud and account takeover, from Credit Reference Agency Experian, VeriSign, Fellowes and Royal Mail
- A revelation of the problems of corporate identity fraud, from fraud expert Equifax
- Proof of the problems that the public sector face from identity fraud, with demonstration of the benefits of cross sector data sharing, as well as the police perspective on fraud
- A range of statistics, case studies and questions confronting the issues that fraud raises for businesses and individuals about trust and what we can determine about the profile of victims and fraudsters.

Comment from CIFAS

CIFAS Chief Executive Peter Hurst notes: “Fraud is an insidious crime. Not only does it affect consumers and businesses financially, but its impact in terms of reputation, trust and time are unquantifiable. In partnership with other industry participants, this report lays bare the facts. It is only through such collaboration that the continued fight against fraud can be won. Not only is fraud prevention a shared responsibility but it must also become a shared duty across both private and public sectors.”

For further information, please contact: press@cifas.org.uk

Notes for editors:

1. CIFAS is the UK's Fraud Prevention Service with over 260 Member organisations spread across banking, credit cards, asset finance, retail credit, mail order, insurance, investment management, telecommunications, factoring and share dealing. Members share information on identified frauds in the fight to prevent further fraud. CIFAS is unique and was the first data sharing scheme of its type in the world. Other schemes modeled on CIFAS have been set up in Southern Africa and Germany.
2. CIFAS wishes to thank the following organizations for their assistance and collaboration in producing The Anonymous Attacker: Equifax, Experian, Federation of Small Businesses, Fellowes, Get Safe Online London Metropolitan Police Service, Ordnance Survey, Outforce UK and the Driving Standards Agency, Royal Mail, and VeriSign. The Anonymous Attacker has been issued in support of National Identity Fraud Prevention Week.
3. National Identity Fraud Prevention Week 2009 takes place from 12 to 19 October and is supported by: the Metropolitan Police, Fellowes, National Fraud Authority, Federation of Small Businesses, Equifax, CIFAS - The UK's Fraud Prevention Service, Callcredit, Experian, Association of Chief Police Officers, the Home Office's Identity and Passport Service, British Chambers of Commerce, British Retail Consortium and the Royal Mail.
4. A hard copy of The Anonymous Attacker are available can be provided to journalists upon request, while stocks last.