

Founder of IDTheftSecurity.com sees a misunderstanding of concepts in the discourse about identity theft and how to combat it

(BOSTON, Massachusetts – April 13, 2005 – IDTheftSecurity.com) Advocates and elected officials continue to call for privacy rights in the wake of this year's blitzkrieg of identity theft and related attacks. A nationally recognized security expert advises those seeking solutions to the problem of identity theft not to view privacy rights as a panacea.

“People are conflating the problem of identity theft and the quest for ‘privacy rights,’” said Robert Siciliano, a nationally televised and quoted authority on personal security and identity theft.

“The security of people’s identities and the idea of privacy are two different matters,” Siciliano continued. “We can achieve identity security, but the idea of ‘privacy rights’ clings to the mistaken notion that privacy exists in a high-tech world. Privacy is an unnecessary variable to stop thieves and safeguard consumers’ financial information.”

On Feb. 24, shortly after the ChoicePoint Inc. identity theft scandal broke, Siciliano appeared on CNBC's "The Closing Bell" to discuss the dangers of identity theft. On April 8, *SearchSecurity.com* quoted him in response to renowned security technologist Bruce Schneier's criticism of two-factor authentication, a technology Siciliano favors for staving identity theft.

CNN's "Wolf Blitzer Reports" featured Siciliano and others in a segment covering identity theft on April 12. Siciliano is author of "The Safety Minute: 01" and an upcoming book, "Identity Theft Pandemic: Curing the Identity Theft Virus."

“This is a war not only against identity theft,” Siciliano said, “but also against the misperceptions surrounding how to combat it. To strike a decisive blow against identity theft, those fighting this war must strive for security, not privacy.”

An April 7 press release from the office of Congressman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., illustrated how ideas about privacy permeate efforts at the highest levels to curb identity theft. In the release, Rep. Thompson, ranking member of the Committee on Homeland Security, called not only for better security of personal and financial information, but also for the protection of “individual privacy.”

“Privacy is an illusion,” Siciliano said. “Consumers, privacy advocates, and elected officials alike should never expect it. To try to ensure it is a misguided response however well-intentioned.”

“Technology available for many years has rendered the notion of privacy quaint and antiquated,” Siciliano added. “The information is already out there. Industry needs to realize that it is nearly impossible to protect consumers’ financial and identifying data from thieves.”

“We have a lazy system,” Siciliano continued. “It is an honor system set up for convenience’s sake. It promotes theft. We still rely on a person’s handwritten signature as a form of identification. It’s comical, actually.”

“Any unauthorized individual or organized criminal organization can open numerous accounts under anyone’s name at any time,” Siciliano concluded. “We must upgrade and change, in fundamental ways, how we authenticate identities.”

On March 15, *CFO Magazine*’s Peter Krass and, last week, *MSNBC*’s Bob Sullivan wrote articles providing useful overviews of the year’s debacles, thus far, in identity theft, the types that can occur, and various companies’ responses to the problem.

“With security breaches occurring on a massive scale, we are in the midst of an identity theft apocalypse, a pandemic,” said Siciliano. “We must employ every tool at our disposal and make serious changes to defeat the crafty identity thief, who masquerades in countless forms.”

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Siciliano is available to discuss identity theft as it pertains to personal finances, the terrorism threat, and national security. A speaker as featured on CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, "ABC News with Sam Donaldson," "The Montel Williams Show," "Maury Povich," "Sally Jesse Raphael" and "The Howard Stern Show." Siciliano leads seminars nationwide. He has been quoted in Reuters, RealtyTimes.com, Woman's Day, Good Housekeeping, Mademoiselle, The New York Post, The New York Times, The Washington Times, The Chicago Tribune, The Christian Science Monitor and other publications.

Siciliano's blog is available at www.IDTheftSecurity.blogspot.com. Siciliano can be reached at 1 (888) SICILIANO (742-4542). The following URLs will take readers to his Web site and information about his work:

Main Web site: <http://www.IDTheftSecurity.com>

Siciliano's biography: http://www.idtheftsecurity.com/PDF/11x17_1wc.pdf

Testimonials: http://www.idtheftsecurity.com/PDF/11x17_3wc.pdf

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