

The grim situation regarding identity theft

The following are some statistics published lately:

1. Hacking has changed in the last several years from young hackers who performed their act for their amusement and sense of achievement, to professional organized crime.
2. In the 12 months ended in July 2007, there were 15 million reported cases of identity theft in the US alone. The average damage cost of such identity theft was \$3,648. This mounts to a total of around \$50 billion. This is a staggering upturn of about 100% from a year before. If this trend continues, and according to experts it will, we're facing a \$100 billion problem this year in the US alone. It is apparent that we're facing an identity theft tsunami.
3. Almost 80% of internet users use the same password they use at work when asked to open an account in a web site.
4. The Wikipedia scandal, of commercial companies employing writers who tamper the Wikipedia articles in a way that will favor the companies they work for, revealed also a counter measure that Wikipedia intend to use. It is small free code software which is able to discover the fact that the update to the article comes from a certain company's network.
5. A Trojan horse that will send the user's credentials off to the criminal costs \$600.
6. A list of one million emails addresses costs \$100.
7. Renting a spam server which will send out millions of emails costs \$500.
8. It is believed that around 10% of the users fall in phishing traps.
9. So, a phisher who sends out 1 million of emails with a Trojan horse is expected to get 100,000 credentials.

To summarize the situation, we're dealing with organized crime, phishing for our identities through offering us goodies in innocent looking web sites such as "free ring tones", "free news and services" or others, or sending "official" looking letters that request an urgent reply before our brokerage account, paypal account or other account is cut off. They have the ability to discover the company we work for, our bank and ecommerce accounts and are willing to make use of that information to steal our money.

Scary!!!!