

Identity Theft Expert and MyLaptopGPS: Frequency of Laptop Thefts Fueling Possible 100 Percent Year-Over-Year Increase in Cost of the Crime

(BOSTON, Mass. - March 31, 2008 - IDTheftSecurity.com) Laptop thefts reported this week exposed more than 90,000 unique data records to thieves, further contributing to a fast-paced increase in the crime's collective cost this year. But technology simple and affordable to use could have kept these data records from thieves' eyes, said Robert Siciliano, a widely televised and quoted personal security and [identity theft](#) expert.

"[Laptop theft](#) is at once insidious and preventable," said Siciliano. "Many owners of laptops share the 'it-can't-happen-to-me' mentality, an attitude that lulls them into a false sense of comfort that convinces them their machines need no theft prevention technology. And at organizations that own entire fleets of mobile computing equipment, the cost of prevention prevents them from securing their machines. But laptop computers are highly prone to theft and loss, and the cost of doing nothing in fact carries with it potentially catastrophic costs in the event of even just one laptop theft, whereas preventive measures can cost very little."

CEO of IDTheftSecurity.com and a member of the *Bank Fraud & IT Security Report's* editorial board, Siciliano leads Fortune 500 companies and their clients in workshops that explore consumer education solutions for security issues. A longtime identity theft speaker and author of "The Safety Minute: 01," he has discussed data security and consumer protection on CNBC, on NBC's "Today Show," FOX News, and elsewhere.

News outlets reported laptop thefts of comparable concern to security experts but of disproportionate immediate impact to consumers in March. Following are three examples:

- On March 25th, *Computerworld* reported that a mobile computer stolen from the car of a third-party contractor to Santa Clara, Calif.–based Agilent Technologies Inc. The computer contained names, addresses, Social Security numbers, and investments-related financial data on current and former employees of Agilent, prompting the test and measurement equipment supplier, according to the *Computerworld* article, to send 51,000 letters of notification to past and existing employees possibly affected by the data breach.
- Just days earlier, multiple news outlets reported the theft of a laptop computer belonging to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Stolen from the automobile of a researcher for the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (part of the NIH), the "computer contained information on about 2,500 patients enrolled in a cardiac magnetic resonance imaging study conducted... in Bethesda, Md.," according to a spokesperson for the NHLBI quoted on March 24 in *Government Executive*.
- The March 11th *Buffalo News* reported that HealthNow New York, Buffalo parent of Blue Cross Blue Shield in the western part of that state, had informed 40,000 members that they were at risk of identity theft; their private data, stored on a former employee's laptop computer, had gone missing along with the machine, according to the article. Among the data lost were names, dates of birth, Social

Security numbers, addresses, employer group names, and health insurance identifier numbers, *The Buffalo News* found.

In February, [MyLaptopGPS™](#), provider of Internet-based GPS tracking software for stolen mobile computing equipment, launched the Realtime Estimated Damage Index (REDI) to keep a running tally of high-profile laptop and desktop computer thefts and losses and their associated costs. The REDI's calculation draws on estimates from the FBI and elsewhere reflecting the likelihood that [identity theft](#) and other crimes will occur when a laptop is lost.

Visible at [the company's website](#), the REDI estimated the financial damage from computer losses since the beginning of this year alone to be \$325,376,519 as of March 11th. Today's REDI estimate of \$344,296,005 represented a nearly 6 percent jump over just three weeks' time, and an 11 percent jump since February. The \$9.95 monthly subscription fee for MyLaptopGPS's software paled in comparison.

"We predict that by this time in 2009 the total cost of computer theft will have roughly doubled," said Dan Yost, chief technology officer at MyLaptopGPS. "Consistently tracking five to six percent increases every three or so weeks, the REDI estimates continue to support our expectations, portending a stratospheric year-over-year increase."

MyLaptopGPS combines Internet-based GPS tracking -- which, for tracking and retrieving stolen laptops, is more effective than other forms of GPS -- with other functionalities to secure mobile computing devices. Users launch MyLaptopGPS' features remotely, protecting data even while the machine is in a criminal's hands. Once connected to the Internet, the software silently retrieves, and then deletes, files from machines as it tracks the stolen or missing hardware -- at once returning the data to its rightful owner and removing it from the lost computer.

"My laptop is a crucial tool," said Eddie Manning, proprietor of London Airport Transfer Service. "It contains vital business information, even if it doesn't contain 'thousands of social security numbers' like the headline stolen ones do. There is no way I or my business can afford to have the data, nor the machine itself, just walk away. MyLaptopGPS is the answer."

Readers may [download a demo](#) of MyLaptopGPS. A white paper [is also available](#).

Additionally, MyLaptopGPS offers SafeRegistry™, a comprehensive system for inventorying entire fleets of mobile computers, as well as a full line of highly renowned SafeTags™, which are police-traceable property tags designed to secure iPods, cell phones, BlackBerry devices, and other mobile property.

According to *USA Today*, theft of personal data more than tripled in 2007. Readers may [view video of Siciliano](#) discussing this news on the new "FOX Business" network. To learn more about identity theft, a major concern for anyone who's lost a laptop computer to thieves, readers may go to [video of Siciliano at VideoJug](#).

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About MyLaptopGPS

Since 1984, Tri-8, Inc. (DBA MyLaptopGPS.com) has specialized in complete system integration. From real-time electronic payment processing software to renowned mid-market ERP implementations, the executive team at MyLaptopGPS has been serving leading enterprises and implementing world-class data systems that simply work. With MyLaptopGPS™, Tri-8, Inc. brings a level of expertise, dedication, knowledge and service that is unmatched. MyLaptopGPS™'s rock-solid performance, security, and reliability flow directly from the company's commitment to top-notch software products and services for almost 25 years.

About IDTheftSecurity.com

Identity theft affects us all, and Robert Siciliano, CEO of IDTheftSecurity.com and member of the *Bank Fraud & IT Security Report's* editorial board, makes it his mission to provide consumer education solutions on identity theft to Fortune 500 companies and their clients. A leader of personal safety and security seminars nationwide, Siciliano has been featured on "The Today Show," CNN, MSNBC, CNBC, "FOX News," "The Suze Orman Show," "The Montel Williams Show," "Maury Povich," "Sally Jesse Raphael," "The Howard Stern Show," and "Inside Edition." The Privacy Learning Institute features him on its Website. Numerous magazines, print news outlets, and wire services have turned to him, as well, for expert commentary on personal security and identity theft. These include *Forbes*, *USA Today*, *Entrepreneur*, *Woman's Day*, *Mademoiselle*, *Good Housekeeping*, *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *United Press International*, *Reuters*, and others.

For more information, visit Siciliano's [Web site](#), [blog](#), and [YouTube page](#).

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