

The Staples logo, featuring the word "STAPLES" in white capital letters on a red rectangular background.

# shredders

Powerful ways to protect your identity



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A national benchmark survey by Staples<sup>1</sup> revealed new and alarming statistics concerning identity theft. Staples developed this proprietary survey to gauge consumer awareness and use the findings to better address the needs of its customers. Below is a summary of key survey findings.

## Identity Theft - National Problem AND Criminal Activity

- 72% of Americans are more concerned about identity theft now than two years ago
- 52% are unsure they are doing enough to protect their identity
- 43% of those surveyed wish they had more information on how to protect themselves from identity theft
- 33% have friends or relatives who have been victims of identity theft
- One in three victims (35%) became aware of the theft when contacted by their financial institution; 30% found inconsistencies in their credit card and financial statements
- Only 48% of those victimized contacted the police; victims are more likely to contact their financial institution (82%) or a credit reporting agency (61%)
- Americans rely heavily on the Internet (34%) and media resources such as newspapers, magazine and television (30%) for information related to identity theft

## A Shredder Nation

- Two out of three Americans own a shredder
- 43% of shredder owners are using straight cut shredders
- 62% of Americans put shredded materials directly into the garbage; 32% recycle shredded materials and 9% use as it as packing material when mailing boxes
- Shredders are most used on outdated financial papers (86%), credit card offers (79%) and credit card statements (72%)
- Only 51% of Americans are shredding junk mail, such as credit card offers, (an unsuspecting source of identity theft) and 47% are shredding medical records
- Among those with a shredder, 59% use it weekly or more often

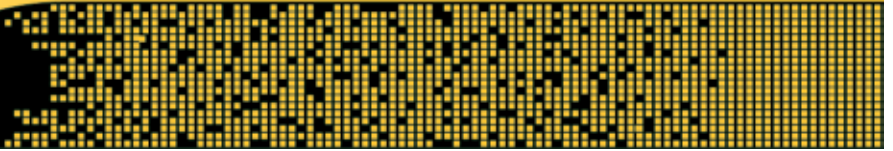
## Most Likely to Shred

- Older Americans (ages 35-54, 55+) are more likely than younger Americans (ages 18-34) to see traditional theft methods such as dumpster diving as a larger threat, rather than virtual methods
- Those most likely to own a shredder are older (74% over 55) and have a higher income (74% of \$50,000 households versus 56% of sub-\$50,000 households), and to be college educated (71% versus 63% with no college degree)
- Only 40% of the college-crowd (18-24) own a shredder; much lower than among the post-college crowd (25-44) 63% and older Americans (45+) 72%
- The college-crowd also tends to use their shredders less often – only 29% use it 3-5 times per week and 22% use it less than once per month

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## Online Threats

- Online Americans are using Internet protection software to guard against the three biggest perceived online threats: hackers (60%), viruses (38%) and spyware (24%)
- Females are more prone to fear viruses (41%) and hackers (32%) than males (35% and 28% respectively); whereas males are more likely to fear spyware (31%) than females (18%)
- One in four online Americans (24%) never back up the files on their computer
- Three out of four online Americans password protect computers that carry personal account information
- One in three (30%) of online Americans never change their password or only do so when prompted by the computer

## About the Survey

The Staples Identity Theft Survey was conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs, which polled 1,001 American adults via telephone, and 2,227 American adults online, May 7-14, 2007. Survey results are weighted to US census data by age and gender within region. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.1% for the telephone survey and +/- 2.1% for the online survey.