



IDENTITY THEFT



Protecting Your Identity

(NAPSA)—It's time to buy that new PC and figure out what to do with the old one. After carefully moving your important files to your new computer, you also made sure to protect your privacy by deleting all your old files. You double check your old folders to ensure the hard drive does not have your old Quicken files, tax records, and credit card account information.

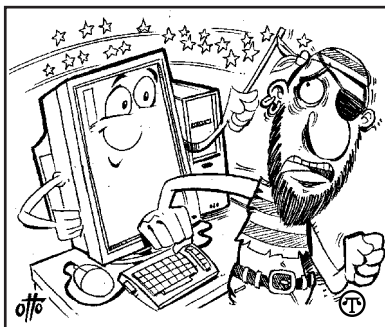
Yet you later discover you're a victim of identity theft where all your data on your old PC was retrieved from the old hard drive.

It's hard to believe, but it's true. A MIT grad student recently bought 158 old hard drives on eBay to see how much data was recoverable. He found more than 5,000 credit card numbers, financial and medical records, and other sensitive files on hard drives.

"It is important for consumers to understand that they need to do more than merely delete their files on their computers," says Steve Cullen, senior vice president, Consumer and Client Product Delivery at Symantec. "Without taking additional action they run a huge risk that others could access their private information."

The most common way to delete files in Windows and Macintosh systems is to drag the file to the Macintosh 'trash can' or Windows 'recycle bin.' While this removes the file from the desktop, it does not remove it from the hard drive. In fact, you can restore the file by simply opening the trash can or recycling bin and dragging the file to the desktop.

You can go yet one step further by emptying your trash or recy-



The latest technology can help you prevent the privacy pirates from getting at your identity.

cling bin. While you will receive a prompt from your computer asking you if you are sure you want to delete the data, this process will not delete a file permanently.

Fortunately, there are programs that can protect your privacy by 'cleansing' your hard drive of all your old files. Products like the popular Norton SystemWorks from Symantec are available for both PCs and Macintosh computers.

Norton SystemWorks is a 'suite' of utilities that includes a number of problem solving tools to help computer users out of a jam. One of these tools is called Wipe Info. Wipe Info is designed to allow you to remove selected files or folders from your hard drive permanently.

Wiping a hard drive clean is painless using software like Norton SystemWorks. It's much easier than replacing your credit cards after a data thief gets hold of the numbers.

For more information on Norton SystemWorks, go to www.symantec.com.