

ASK FRANK

Former Master Forger Frank Abagnale Jr. Answers Questions About Personal Security

by Frank Abagnale

(NAPSA)—**Q: I'm about to purchase a new computer and have an old computer that I no longer use that I want to donate. Will this be safe if I delete all of my files first?**



Abagnale

A: Even if you delete all of your files and programs, identity thieves can still recover this data. To be sure they cannot read deleted files and steal your identity, you must install and run a utility program that overwrites the entire hard drive, permanently erasing all of your personal information. Once you have safely donated your old computer, be sure to sign up for a program like DigitalProtection Plus (www.digitalprotectionplus.com or 1-800-826-1329) and install the anti-virus and firewall software on your new computer. DPP also gives you identity theft assistance, should you become a victim.

Q: I've been checking my credit report monthly but I am worried this may show up on my credit report and look like I have been applying for credit every month. Should I worry about this?

A: You should check your credit report twice a year and use a program like PrivacyGuard (www.privacyguard.com or 1-866-GUARDME—1-866-482-7363) to monitor your credit history during the rest of the year. Financial companies will recognize the difference between you checking your credit history and a check by a company that is considering extending your credit. But a company may wonder if something is wrong if it finds that you are checking your credit history every month.



Q: I was a victim of ID theft and was able to get some information about the thief, like phone numbers he called, the name he traveled under and other clues. Should I be a detective?

A: Absolutely not: you should turn any information you have over to police and concentrate on recovering from being an ID theft victim. An identity fraud resolution service like IdentitySecure (1-866-263-8258) will help guide you through the process of restoring your good name. If you are an IdentitySecure member and you become the victim of identity theft, then IdentitySecure will assign a caseworker to provide you with all of the information needed to submit your info to the proper authorities.

Remember ID thieves are professionals—and so are IdentitySecure's caseworkers who can help you through the difficult process and help you recover as quickly and stress-free as possible.

Frank Abagnale is a retired master forger whose early life was the basis for the movie "Catch Me If You Can." He now is a spokesperson for PG, DPP and IDSecure and assists companies and consumers in preventing fraud. To have your questions considered for this column, please send it to askfrank@privacy.trilegiant.com. Frank can only answer questions selected for this column.

A three-month trial membership in PrivacyGuard, Digital Protection-Plus or IdentitySecure can be enjoyed for only \$1. The trial membership can be canceled at any time during the three-month trial period by calling toll free and the member will owe nothing further. Unless the member calls to cancel, the membership will be extended automatically for an entire year at the \$89.99 annual fee for PrivacyGuard or the \$99.99 annual fee for IdentitySecure or Digital ProtectionPlus. The membership will be automatically renewed annually upon expiration at the then-current annual fee, billed to a credit card account, without the member having to do anything further. Additionally, members may call toll free to cancel at any time and receive a pro-rata refund.