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## PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

**BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY:** Will you use all of your vacation time this year?

Guest Comment

### Group addresses computer-security issues

Philadelphia Business Journal - June 23, 2006 by Ed Quinn

You've heard it before. Computer viruses can erase your entire system; someone can use your computer to attack others, or a crook can steal your credit-card information placing your credit score in jeopardy.

In Pennsylvania, these situations are happening more than ever. The Federal Trade Commission estimates that in 2005 nearly 24,000 residents fell victim to the greatest threats, consumer fraud and identity theft. That is up 33 percent from just two years ago.

In fact, Philadelphia ranks as the top city in the state for fraud and identity theft complaints. Philadelphia also ranks as one of the top major metropolitan areas in the country for the crime.

Crooks have conjured up new and sophisticated ways to get the data they want. You can unknowingly hand your most important information to them through phony Web sites and official looking e-mails. Virus programs called "keyloggers" record and report back everything you type.

The Internet only makes it easier to abuse your personal information. Cyber thieves specialize in making illicit purchases, acquiring loans and credit cards and even selling the stolen information to other thieves.

So it's important for us to take the steps to protect ourselves. Be wary of who you share your personal information with and where you record it, especially on the Web. And while online, use and maintain anti-virus software and a firewall. It's also a good idea to check your financial statements regularly and report suspicious activity.

Government officials, law enforcement and businesses must work together to create management practices and policies that protect consumers and commerce on the Internet. They must employ the latest technologies and tools to safeguard the Web and catch Internet thieves. When these crooks are caught, they must be treated like the serious criminals they are.

My company, IBM, and more than 40 other organizations have formed the Data Governance Council, a global effort to move beyond traditional approaches to security, privacy, compliance, and operational risk policy, promoting a more complete approach to managing an organization's most sensitive data.

The Internet is a tremendously efficient and economical way of communicating, learning and conducting business. Most of us can't imagine life without it anymore. But for it to continue to grow in utility, we must be assured that putting our time, energy and money into the Web, is the safest proposition possible.

*Ed Quinn is a vice president with IBM Global Services and a senior location executive for IBM in Philadelphia.*