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Welcome! Identity theft may be one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States, affecting approximately 9-10 million consumers each year. According to the FTC, 29 percent of all identity theft complaints nationwide were from young adults, aged 18 to 29 years old. So this month, we're focusing on what college students should know to help protect their identity.

Read on for some tips so you can protect your future now and stay *On Course* financially!

-Jennifer Lane, CFP

## On Campus - Calls, Computers, and Identity Theft

**With the great excitement surrounding the first few weeks of college, students may get caught up in signing up for drawings, surveys, and other school activities and loose sight of protecting their identity.**

Here are some helpful tips.

**Even college students should be checking their credit reports. Go to [AnnualCreditReport.com](http://AnnualCreditReport.com) to get reports from the three credit reporting bureaus.**

### Requests for your social security info

- Never provide your social security number without asking how it will be used and who is going to see it.
- Surveys and drawings do not need your social security number - decline to participate if you need to provide it.
- Credit applications that give you t-shirts or other small tokens are not worth the risk of identity theft!
- Potential employers may ask for your social security number to perform a credit check, but that will happen deep in the interview process, not at the beginning.
- If you would prefer not to receive credit solicitations, visit [OptOutPrescreen.com](http://OptOutPrescreen.com).

### Phishing and Phone Scams

- Remember that businesses you're a customer of already have your info. You should not have to confirm it over an email even though the email appears to come from your financial institution.
- If you're in doubt about a call or email, do not reply or give out information. Instead, you call the company to determine if the request is legitimate and let them know about the scheme.
- Scammers often call college students to offer to help them get scholarships or loans - for a fee. Ignore them!
- The [government's identify theft website](http://government's identify theft website) is quite good if you have questions.

### Public Computers

- While it may seem far-fetched, there really are people who sit in strategic locations and use binoculars to gather id's and passwords. Be careful and block your screen view when entering sensitive info.
- Close out of the Internet browser, erase cookies, and log off the computer completely when you're done.

### In This Issue

[On Campus -- Calls, Computers, and Identity Theft](#)

[Question & Answer](#)

[What's New](#)

[Monthly Tip](#)

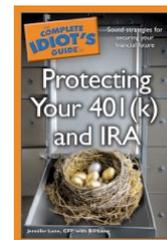


Jennifer's Hint

Many brokerage firms offer a way to consolidate the account statements of everyone in the household into one combined paper statement. Check the customer service link on their website to see if your broker offers this "account householding."

It also makes it more convenient to check for identity theft monthly.

### Get more tips in Jennifer's book



(click for link)

### Helpful Websites

[Annual CreditReport.com](http://AnnualCreditReport.com)

[FTC.gov](http://FTC.gov)

[FTC Identity Theft Website](http://FTC Identity Theft Website)

[ID Theft Awareness](http://ID Theft Awareness)

[OptOutPrescreen.com](http://OptOutPrescreen.com)



## Q&A

**Q:** I called to cancel my monthly credit monitoring service and they told me the government recommended such a service to help prevent identity theft, which they claim is common. I cancelled anyway, but how important do you think such a service is for preventing identity theft? Should I be concerned?

**- Mary from Acton**

**A:** Mary, that charge is not actually for your credit report! It's for your credit score, which you probably need only when applying for credit. Check out [AnnualCreditReport.com](http://AnnualCreditReport.com) to get a free report from the three credit reporting bureaus. Remember that each bureau owes you a free report yearly so you can get a report every four months or so to check throughout the year. Bottom line is you're fine in canceling the service as long as you do check your reports.

## What's New

*The Wall Street Journal* featured Jennifer in two articles on September 20! [By the Book](#) discusses how financial planners use their books with their clients, and [The Write Stuff](#) excerpts *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Protecting Your 401(k) and IRA*.

[Compass Planning Associates](#) helps families, individuals, and small-business clients achieve financial security, knowledge, and control over their money. Our **fee-only, client-centered approach** provides education and guidance for achieving financial goals and dreams.

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