



Press release
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CONVERSATIONS AROUND IDENTITY FRAUD INCREASE BY MORE THAN HALF

IT'S NOT SAFE UNTIL IT'S SHREDED WARNS FELLOWES

Online conversations around personal identity fraud have increased by 66%* during National Identity Fraud Prevention month, as Brits demand information on how to protect their identities.

As many people rely on the internet to search for ways to protect their accounts online, makers of the world's toughest shredders, [Fellowes](#), has today released a step-by-step guide and free to download assets that include advice and tips on protecting yourself from the 'forgotten threat' of paper-based fraud.

The abuse of people's identity accounts for 60% of fraud in the UK¹ and with CIFAS reporting an increase in plastic cards as the product most targeted by fraudsters, it's evident that fraudsters are making use of copies of personal data to open accounts – whether it's post or copies of bank statements.

First things first, be aware that your hoarding will find you out.

Whether it's old handbags or boxes which you just 'haven't found the time to throw out yet' they need to go! Although those old passports and pay slips may no longer be of use to you, that by no means implies that they won't be of great use to somebody else. It just takes one piece of information to build a bigger picture of you.

Check the following places for personal information that may have been forgotten about:

- Handbags – current and old ones. Look out for old receipts, bank cards and other personal documents that may be being stored in them.
- Window sills- If you can see out, they can see in! That convenient little ledge may seem like a practical shelf but remember to keep all private documents well away.
- Console tables in the hall – research reveals that 41% of Brits know what a friend's or neighbour's salary is having had sight of a pay slip while visiting their home. It's probably safe to say that they didn't catch glimpse of those numbers whilst they were being stored in a Bankers Box.

- Shared letter boxes – Sharing isn't caring when it comes to post. In the time that you spend delaying that walk to collect your letters, you're giving somebody else the opportunity to access your private information.

What to do with the information you find

With all the documents you find you need to ask yourself 'will I ever need this again?' If the answer is no, the best solution to prevent identity fraud is to shred the documents. For extra security, be sure to use a cross-cut shredder to guarantee absolute disposal of your information. For some information, shredding isn't an option as you may need the documents again. In this case, make sure that you file away your confidential information in a safe place such as a Bankers Box.

Top tips for shredding

- Rule number one: don't let the shredding pile build up like the ironing pile! If you don't shred as you go, you will end up making it very easy for fraudsters to access your information as it will all be in one place
- Secondly, unlike ironing (depending on who you are) shredding can be quite fun and therapeutic. If your shredder has a safety lock, this is a job that you can pass onto the kids to help with.

Why is shredding so important?

New research commissioned by Fellowes reveals alarming statistics around complacency in UK homes:

- More than half of those surveyed confirmed that they have seen private documents in a friend's or neighbour's house whilst visiting
- Thirty eight per cent of respondents are aware of the amount of credit owned by friends and neighbours having seen a statement of account from a mortgage lender or bank left on the side
- Two fifths of Brits (41%) have their passwords written down 'somewhere'
- Almost a quarter (24%), forget to shred confidential documents consistently and 12% admit to throwing bank statements and other important documents straight into the bin
- 29% of people share their pin number with one or more people.

Get shredding!

A bit of friendly competition is always good fun, so why not challenge your household or workplace to a 'Shred It' challenge. The rules are simple, all contestants must find as many documents as possible which need to be shredded and the person with the biggest pile of shredded paper in the end wins (we'll leave the prizes to you!).

Let the adults do the shredding and give the younger member of the family the shredded paper to make fun things for the family.

Also, with Halloween just around the corner, a little imagination could turn that pile of shredded paper into anything from a spider's web to the contents of a witch's cauldron...more ideas can be found [here!](#)

Fellowes is a lead partner of National Identity Fraud Prevention Month, a campaign backed by organisations from the private and public sector.

People who want to know more about the issue of personal identity fraud can by visiting an online resource '[Don't let it be you](#)' which aims to raise awareness of the threat of personal identity fraud and to arm all consumers with advice, guidance and support to reduce the levels of attack.

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors:

- Sysomos is a social media analytics tool that provides measurement, monitors social media conversations. Sysomos provides instant access to all social media conversations from blogs, social networks and micro-blogging services to forums, video sites and media sources
- *66% more activity in the first week of 1-7th October than the last week of September 2014.

About Fellowes

[Fellowes](#), Inc. offers an extensive range of products to equip the workspace, including paper shredders, binders, laminators, desktop accessories and record storage solutions.

Founded in 1917 by Harry Fellowes and headquartered in Itasca, Illinois, Fellowes, Inc. employs more than 1,200 people throughout the world and has operations in 15 countries. Visit fellowes.com for more information.