

# ONE-QUARTER OF CANADIAN ADULTS (24%) HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY IDENTITY THEFT

*Seven In Ten (71%) Express Concern That Their Identity May Be Stolen And Used For Fraudulent Means – But Many Behaving Carelessly When It Comes To Discarding Sensitive Personal Or Financial Documents*



## Ipsos Reid

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## ONE-QUARTER OF CANADIAN ADULTS (24%) HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY IDENTITY THEFT

*Seven In Ten (71%) Express Concern That Their Identity May Be Stolen And Used For Fraudulent Means – But Many Behaving Carelessly When It Comes To Discarding Sensitive Personal Or Financial Documents*

**Toronto, ON** – A new Ipsos Reid survey conducted on behalf of Fellowes Canada Ltd, reveals that one-quarter of Canadian adults (24%) – representing approximately 5.7 million Canadians nationally – have either themselves personally (4%), or know someone who has (20%), been subject to identity theft.

Given the widespread reach of identity theft among Canadians, it follows then that a good majority (71%) are concerned about the fact that their “identity may be stolen and used for fraudulent means by criminals for financial gain”.

But while most are concerned about identity theft, many Canadians appear to be behaving somewhat carelessly when it comes to this issue. When asked how often they throw out junk mail without reading it, a majority of Canadians (81%) admit to either “always” (16%), “regularly” (42%), or “sometimes” (24%) doing so. Only 19% say they “never do so”. And further, one in ten Canadians (12%) say that if they received an unsolicited credit card application or pre-approved cheques from a credit card company, that they would put them in the garbage as is.

This behaviour is common despite the fact that 94% of Canadians are aware that “criminals could steal your identity and use it for fraudulent means simply by using discarded sensitive personal or financial documents”.



Three-quarters (74%) express interest in knowing more about how to protect their identity from being stolen (30% say they are very interested). One-quarter (26%) say they are not interested (5% not at all interested).

Of those who don't have a paper shredder, three in ten (28%) say they are "very likely" (11%) or "quite likely" (17%) to buy one for their home in the next 12 months in order to destroy sensitive or personal financial documents. But 72% say they are unlikely to purchase one (37% "very unlikely").

*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted for Fellowes Canada Ltd and fielded from February 10<sup>th</sup> to February 13<sup>th</sup> 2006. For the survey, a representative sample of 1078 adult Canadians were interviewed via an on-line survey vehicle. The sample used in this study has been weighted according to Census data to accurately reflect the population of Canadians. With a sample of this size, the aggregate results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had this entire population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within each sub-grouping of the survey population.*

### ***One-Quarter (24%) Of Canadians Have Either Themselves Personally Or Know Someone Who Has Been Subject To Identity Theft...***

One-quarter of Canadians (24%) say that they themselves personally (4%) or someone they know (20%) has been subject to identity theft. Most (74%), however, have not experienced this.

- Residents of Ontario (28%) are the most likely to have been touched by identity theft in this way, while residents of Atlantic Canada (15%) are the least likely.



## ***Seven In Ten Canadians (71%) Express Concern That Their Identity May Be Stolen And Used For Fraudulent Means...***

Seven in ten Canadians (71%) are either “quite concerned” (42%) or “very concerned” (28%) that their “identity may be stolen and used for fraudulent means by criminals for financial gain”. Twenty-nine percent say they are not concerned about this potential threat.

- Level of concern runs highest in Quebec (77%), followed by Saskatchewan/Manitoba (73%), and British Columbia (71%).
- Those over the age of 35 are the most likely to express concern that their identity may be stolen (74% vs. 62% among those ages 18-34).

## ***Ninety-four Percent Say They Are Aware That Criminals Can Steal Their Identity And Use It For Fraudulent Means By Using Discarded Sensitive Personal Or Financial Documents...***

When asked whether or not they are aware that “criminals could steal your identity and use it for fraudulent means simply by using discarded sensitive personal or financial documents”, 94% say “yes”, while just 6% say “no”.

- Awareness is highest in British Columbia (97%) and Ontario and Atlantic Canada (both at 95%).

## ***Majority (81%) Admit To Throwing Out Junk Mail Without Ever Reading It...***

When asked how often they throw out junk mail without reading it, a majority of Canadians (81%) admit to either “always” (16%), “regularly” (42%), or “sometimes” (24%) doing so. Only 19% say they “never do so”.

- Residents of Quebec (86%) are the most likely to admit to throwing out junk mail without reading it, followed by those in Ontario (82%) and Atlantic Canada (80%).



### ***And One In Ten (12%) Say They Put Credit Card Applications Or Pre-Approved Cheques In The Garbage Without Ripping Or Shredding Them...***

One in ten Canadians (12%) say that if they received an unsolicited credit card application or pre-approved cheques from a credit card company, that they would put them in the garbage as is.

However, 44% say they would “rip them up and put them in the garbage”, 33% would “shred them”, 9% would “burn them” and 3% would “keep them in a safe place at home”.

- Residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (17%) and Atlantic Canada (16%) are the most likely to “put them in the garbage as is”.
- Residents of British Columbia are the most likely to “shred them” (44%).
- Residents of Ontario and Quebec (both at 47%) and Alberta (45%) are the most likely to “rip them up and put them in the garbage”.
- Those with the lowest levels of education (less than high-school completion) are the most likely to say they would “put them in the garbage as is” (19%).

### ***Among Those Who Don't Have A Paper Shredder, 28% Say They Are Very Likely To Buy One In Next 12 Months...***

Of those who don't have a paper shredder, three in ten (28%) say they are “very likely” (11%) or “quite likely” (17%) to buy one for their home in the next 12 months in order to destroy sensitive or personal financial documents. But 72% say they are unlikely to purchase one (37% “very unlikely”).

Among all Canadians, 39% already have a paper shredder.



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- Residents of Alberta (42%) are the most apt to say they are likely to buy a paper shredder in then next 12 months.

### ***Three-Quarters (74%) Express Interest In Knowing More About How To Protect Their Identity From Being Stolen...***

Three-quarters (74%) express interest in knowing more about how to protect their identity from being stolen (30% say they are very interested). One-quarter (26%) say they are not interested (5% not at all interested).

- Interest is highest in Quebec (83%), followed by Saskatchewan/Manitoba (75%) and Ontario and Alberta (both at 73%).

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