



WhiteCanyon Helps Inside Edition Expose Identity Theft

Discarded Computers, Containing Social Security and Tax Information Easily Found in Thrift Shops, Even Town Dumps

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[WhiteCanyon's CEO Steve Elderkin helped Inside Edition's investigator Matt Maegher show the dangers of throwing away old computers without first properly and permanently erasing the hard drive.]

Old computers containing personal information including Social Security numbers, tax returns and passwords are being discarded every day and can easily lead to identity theft, Inside Edition reports.

Inside Edition bought 25 computers from thrift shops in Washington, D.C., Boston, Virginia and New York City. Old computers can be had for as little as \$30 at almost any thrift store. Inside Edition also obtained 4 more computers free at a town dump.

With the aid of computer expert Steve Elderkin, **Inside Edition took out the hard drives**, the components in which the information is stored. Elderkin, who has consulted with the FBI and Defense Department, was surprised by how much personal information he found.

"Of all the hard drives, not one was cleaned of any of the information," he told Inside Edition. "Depending on the hard drive itself, you could have all the data in a matter of minutes with almost no work."

Another person whose computer gave up secrets was Waldo Tibbets, an advertising executive from Arlington, Virginia, thought he had erased all private information before he donated his computer to a Goodwill store.

With the help of its expert, Inside Edition found otherwise. In just a few minutes, Elderkin found that the computer contained the Social Security numbers of both Tibbets and his wife.

"That's just about enough to give you a heart attack seeing that," Tibbets said. "I was absolutely floored."

Inside Edition also found his computer password and all the information from his tax return.

Tibbets told Inside Edition he was glad it wasn't a criminal that found his personal information: "Well, I've got to say I am happy that it was some enterprising journalist that found it rather than some criminally minded, tech-savvy person."

"He really never really deleted anything," Elderkin told Inside Edition.