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The Palmetto Record

Monthly publication of *The Association of Records Managers & Administrators, Charleston, South Carolina Chapter*



Upcoming Events:

* November 14
@Pierce Park, Daniel Island

Disaster Recovery

* December 19
@ Partridge Creek Gun Club

Round Table Business Meeting

* January 16
@Nelson Mullins Law Firm

Time Management/Getting Organized



Dumped Mortgage Files Invite Identity Theft

From the Wall Street Journal

Last month, Waldell Thomas, a maintenance worker at Montego Apartments in Atlanta, made a discovery inside the complex's Dumpster: a cache of 40 boxes of loan files containing Social Security numbers, credit reports and other data on customers of Ameriquest Mortgage Co.

"I said: 'God, this is people's personal information,'" Mr. Thomas recalls. "What if that had been my information and somebody had come along and got it?"

Privacy experts say this sort of mishap -- which leaves borrowers vulnerable to identity theft -- is a growing concern in the mortgage industry. The mortgage process has become more complex, with consumer information flowing through the hands of a menagerie of independent brokers, itinerant loan officers, investors and financial middlemen. With the housing downturn forcing many of these firms to sack workers and shut branches, some mortgage files are getting lost in the shuffle, turning up in places like Dumpsters that are easily accessed by scam artists.

"In times of organizational change or chaos, we're much more likely to see those kinds of leaks -- what I call inadvertent disclosures," Dartmouth College management professor Eric Johnson says.

Experts say that putting numbers on how frequently confidential mortgage data is leaked is difficult, because many breaches go unnoticed. In July, however, Bob Segall, a reporter at WTHR-TV in Indianapolis, tried to get a sense of how bad the problem was around central Indiana. Over three days, he peered into 40 Dumpsters behind loan branches and title companies that handle mortgage documents. In nearly half - 18 -- he discovered sensitive information about borrowers.

paper, dating back 20, 30, 40 years," he said. Among the finds inside the mortgage files: a letter from one borrower's counselor saying he was doing well in alcohol rehab.

Several borrowers went on camera to express their outrage after Mr. Segall informed them their documents had been tossed in the trash. Among them were Russ Biegel and Harold Webb, who had just bought a house together outside Indianapolis.

"I don't frequently get telephone calls from investigative reporters," Mr. Biegel, 54 years old, recalls. "When he told me, I was very shocked. I trusted people I shouldn't have trusted. You just think that these things are going to be automatically protected and they're not."

R.J. Schlecht, a security expert at the Mortgage Bankers Association, says industry players are constantly working to improve safeguards. And while small and midsize players can be vulnerable to security problems, he says, the big lenders that amass most of the consumer data "have the resources and knowledge to be able to provide a lot of controls and mechanisms" to protect borrowers' privacy.

State and federal authorities have written rules aimed at discouraging breaches that can benefit Dumpster-diving scam artists. Under such rules, lenders and other firms that handle mortgage documents are generally required to hold onto these papers for lengthy periods, and to shred or burn them when they finally discard them.

The Federal Trade Commission and other regulators have begun taking enforcement action. In February, North Carolina's attorney general fined two mortgage firms in Charlotte for dumping loan files into the trash.

"You could see their complete financial lives on

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Theft (continued from front)

In July, authorities in Hawaii fined a defunct mortgage-escrow firm \$10,000 for improperly disposing of mortgage documents. That case arose in March when Jim Kelly, editor of Honolulu's Pacific Business News, stumbled upon 39 boxes of mortgage documents as he was dropping newspapers at a recycling center.

Mr. Kelly says he almost walked away, but he recalled being a victim of identity theft years ago. He hauled away the boxes and stored them in his garage, making four trips in his wife's SUV.

Then he tracked down the firm's former owner, who told Mr. Kelly he had paid a handyman \$150 to remove the documents from his basement, where they had been stored in the six years since he had shuttered the company. The state took possession of the documents from Mr. Kelly and shredded them.

In the case of the Ameriquest loan files, DeKalb County, Ga., police have stored the boxes in their evidence room. Deputy Chief Mike Burrows says initial inspection has turned up loans made to buyers in Georgia and Florida dating between the late 1990s and 2005. At this point, he says, no evidence of a crime has emerged, although whoever is responsible could face a civil fine from state bank regulators.

In recent months Ameriquest's parent, ACC Capital Holdings, has shut down Ameriquest's loan offices, but it continues to fight a civil case in federal court in Chicago that accuses the company of defrauding borrowers. The lead attorney in the civil action, Jill Bowman, is seeking to subpoena the Georgia documents.

Ameriquest said, "We take the security of our records very seriously." It said the documents may have been stolen and it's working with police to determine who took them.

The dangers of identity theft in the mortgage business go beyond Dumpsters. Private information can also leak out via the Internet or when computer disks are taken off premises by employees.

On Sept. 21, Dow Jones Newswires reported that files containing Social Security numbers and other information on 5,208 customers of a Citigroup Inc. unit had been inadvertently downloaded onto an Internet "peer-to-peer" file-sharing network.

Dow Jones Newswires, a unit of [Dow Jones](#) & Co., publisher of The Wall Street Journal, determined the breach came after a former business analyst for Citigroup's ABN Amro Mortgage Group joined a file-sharing network where people can share

music and video downloads. Old work-related information that she had downloaded onto her personal computer apparently was inadvertently exposed to the network.

After looking into the matter, Citigroup offered one year of free credit monitoring to affected customers. The company said it is "fully committed to physical, electronic and procedural safeguards to protect personal information."

In case you were wondering.....

From our Records Managers in the UK:

Records manager: Job description

A records manager is responsible for the effective and appropriate management of information produced in and received by organizations, irrespective of the medium in which it exists.

Records management professionals are employed in a wide range of roles. The job increasingly involves advising on records management issues, as well as undertaking practical and strategic activities.

The role is developing in scope due to increased understanding of the value of effective knowledge and information management, particularly within the corporate sector. The demands of legislation, such as the Data Protection Act, have also broadened the range of settings in which records and information management professionals work.

Skills required:

- strong oral and written communication skills;
- the confidence to liaise with a range of staff at all levels within an organization;
- problem-solving and analytical skills;
- the ability to gain a clear overview of an organization and its activities;
- a genuine interest in records and information management and the confidence to pass this on to others, both within and outside the profession;
- the ability to work with IT software and other technology to manage and work with information effectively;
- a good awareness of information management principles and a familiarity with information systems and archives.

Oh, the places we'll go!
Mark these dates on your
calendar and plan to join us

Charleston Chapter Association Records
Managers & Administrators

MEETING DATE	LOCATION	TOPIC
November 14, 2007	Pierce Park, Daniel Island	Disaster Recovery
December 19, 2007	Partridge Creek Gun Club	Round Table Business Meeting
January 16, 2008	Nelson Mullins Law Firm	Time Management/Getting Organized
February 28, 2008	SC Archives and History	E-Leap in to Electronic Records
March 19, 2008	Sommerset Point, Pinopolis	IT vs RIM
April 16, 2008	Daniel Island Company	Computer and Internet Crimes
May 21, 2008	Nelson Mullins, Columbia	Site Tour
June 6, 2008	Awards Banquet	Cypress Gardens



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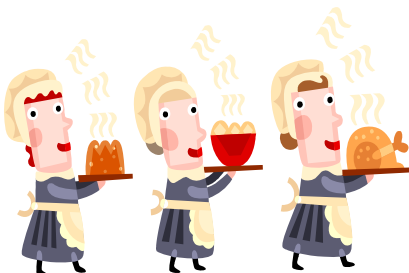
Sherry Villeponteaux
Berkeley County Government

Editor's Note

It is my sincere hope that you and yours have a happy and safe Thanksgiving season.

We all have so much for which to be thankful.....family, good health and plenty to eat! Enjoy!.

Please send me an email at the address to the right or fax 719.4201 if you have news to share (i.e., weddings, births or graduations.) I'll be happy to include them!



The information contained in this newsletter does not necessarily reflect the views of the membership or editor, but is offered as a source of information.

Contributions or gifts to the Association of Records Managers and Administrators, Inc. are not tax deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

The mission of ARMA International is to provide education, research and networking opportunities to information professionals, to enable them to use their skills and experience to leverage the value of records, information and knowledge as corporate assets and as contributors to organizational success.

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DISASTER RECOVERY.....WHAT NOW?

Featuring Heather South, South Carolina Archives and History

On November 14, 2007, we will have a hands on presentation of what to do *first* during an actual disaster. Heather South's recreation of a mock disaster will enable us to experience what it is like to be part of a recovery effort. If you have a few records you would like to bring along to be destroyed and perhaps salvage, please feel free to bring them. We will be outside so dress warmly if the weather is cool.

The Lunch n' Learn meeting will be held Wednesday, November 14 at Pierce Park on Daniel Island. Make your reservation for the event by noon prior to the day of the meeting. Members \$10 and guests \$12. *See page 6 of this newsletter for directions and registration details.*



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Santee Cooper Auditorium Santee Cooper Auditorium is located on the Highway 52 by pass in Moncks Corner.

From Charleston: I-26 West to Moncks Corner exit. Merge on to Highway 52. Follow Highway 52 through Goose Creek then approximately 15 miles until you come to the first stoplight in Moncks Corner. Continue straight ahead through two more traffic lights. Santee Cooper is just beyond the second stoplight on the right. Turn right at the first entrance and then your first left to park.

From Summerville: 17A to Moncks Corner. Keep straight ahead on 17A which will merge with Highway 52 at the 3rd traffic light. Merge left and go to the next traffic light— turn right on to the High52 by pass. (Arby's will be on your right.) Follow the bypass approximately 1/2 mile. Santee Cooper is on the left. Go to the second entrance on the left then make first left to park.

To RSVP, complete the attached and email or fax it to Robin Schumacher at Berkeley County. Fax (843)719-4201, email rschumacher@co.berkeley.sc.us

Charleston Chapter Association of Records Managers & Administrators
Lunch 'n Learn

Name: _____

Date: October 17, 2007

Company: _____

Time: Noon .

Phone # _____

Email: _____

Cost: \$10 members, \$12 non-members, \$8 student (lunch included)

Chapter members _____

Non-Members _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Students _____

Make Checks Payable To: Charleston Chapter ARMA