

Statement
of
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Hearing On

Phony IDs and Credentials Via The Internet - An Emerging Problem

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My name is Thomas W. Seitz. I am originally a resident of the State of New Jersey and I am presently incarcerated at the Baker County Jail located in Macclenny, Florida. I am 23 years old and I am currently serving a prison sentence imposed by the State of New Jersey after I was convicted and sentenced to 3 years for committing the crimes of theft by deception, forgery and uttering a forged instrument. I have also pled guilty to bank fraud and I am awaiting sentencing by the United States District Court, Middle District of Florida.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before this Subcommittee. I hope that I can show its members how relatively easy it is for someone to engage in obtaining information from the Internet, including such personal information as Social Security numbers. Moreover, I hope to show how easy it is to craft phony identification using that information and obtain significant amounts of money with little effort.

I consider myself to be fairly well versed in the use of computers. I have worked with computers since the 6th grade and was employed as a network engineer. I obtained via the Internet, names, social security numbers, and addresses of people by accessing files maintained as public record on the Securities and Exchange Commission Web site. Although at first I did not have the intent to defraud anyone, I started searching the Internet again and determined there were a large number of sites that offered the means to make fake identification and the opportunity presented itself.

I used a computer at the library in Old Bridge, New Jersey and accessed various Web sites that offered documents for downloading including birth certificates and driver's licenses. Some were free so I found one that offered a New Jersey birth certificate and downloaded it. I utilized computer software to add the information I wanted and after I obtained a blank W-2 from the IRS Web site, I took the completed documents with the fake identity information to the New Jersey department of Motor Vehicles and obtained in short order a genuine State of New Jersey photo identification card.

I feel that if I wanted to take the time and effort, I could have used the same documents and obtained a genuine driver's license as well. During the time I was searching the Internet for fake identification Web sites, I frequently came across disclaimers on the individual sites that would say "for novelty use only." I can't think of any reason why a statement like that would be there. It did not deter my actions in any way. I did make a fake driver's license by altering mine using various computer programs including Adobe Photoshop.

After I had the documents, I went on the Internet and obtained a car loan using the identity of people I found on the Web. When these car loans were approved and I received checks, I went to the car dealer to attempt to purchase new vehicles with false identification. For the most part, it was very easy. The new car dealers want to sell cars and pay very little attention to the details of identification. I got cold feet and left the first time I tried to buy a car with fake identification. The second time, the car dealer just accepted my photocopied fake driver's license, took the insurance binder I had previously secured and a short time later, I was driving one of the most expensive vehicles off the lot. I eventually was discovered after the car dealer submitted the paperwork for licensing and the DMV determined the numbers that I used for the driver's license were not valid. I realize what I did was illegal, but I would also say that it was not very difficult to accomplish.

In conclusion, I found that there was a readily available supply of fake identification providers on the Internet. Anyone with some computer skills can download the available templates for fake identification from the fake identification Web sites and produce some high quality fake documents. I feel that if Web sites, especially United States Government Web sites were prohibited from

providing specific personal identifiers on the Web, such as Social Security numbers, it would make activities such as mine a bit more difficult.

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