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## **CENTER FOR BUSINESS ANALYTICS**

### **CASE STUDY**

#### **Preventing Identity Theft**

Identity theft occurs when someone's personal information is stolen for the purpose of impersonating that person, making unauthorized purchases, taking money from bank accounts, or opening new lines of credit with the stolen information. Identity theft should be every citizen's concern. Consumers and professionals should be especially concerned about protecting themselves and those they serve from identity theft. It can damage one's personal reputation and financial credit, result in substantial monetary loss, take an enormous emotional toll and cost years to resolve. Identity thieves are interested in finances, insurance or other benefits.

It can be difficult to catch and convict an identity thief for a variety of reasons. These crimes are often perpetrated by more than one person, as one steals the item (credit card, insurance card, etc.) and/or information (social security number, mother's maiden name, etc.) and a second then makes some type of fraudulent transaction. Local law enforcement resources cannot cover the investigation of all claims. Prevention is the key to overcoming this threat. This case is designed for consumers, students, business service professionals such as accountants, and law enforcement professionals as well. In the case, readers will learn to consider low-tech, paper-based issues as well as issues related to technology. Readers will learn best practices for preventing identity theft at home and in the workplace.