

I want to see my Experian Credit Score because:

It's **FREE** and I am concerned about ID Theft

With enrollment in Triple Advantage™ © 2008 ConsumerInfo.com, Inc.



Other editions: [Mobile](#) | [News Feeds](#) | [E-Newsletters](#) | [Subscribe to paper](#) Find it: [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Rentals](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Place an ad](#) | [Dating](#)

TENNESSEAN.COM

SEARCH ALL

SPONSORED BY: TRI STAR HEALTH SYSTEM

HOME NEWS COMMUNITIES ENTERTAINMENT SPORTS SHOPPING MOMS LIFE VOICES & VIEWS CLASSIFIEDS OBITUARIES CUSTOMER SERVICE

Environment Government & Politics Crime & Courts Education Faith & Values Business Nation & World Multimedia DataCentral

 **Comment, blog & share photos**
[Log in](#) | [Become a member](#)

powered by you and THE TENNESSEAN

Student ID breach embroils thousands

Williamson may offer families credit protection

BY MARIA GIORDANO • STAFF WRITER • JULY 11, 2008

[Read Comments\(19\)](#) [Recommend \(3\)](#) [Print this page](#) [E-mail this article](#)

SHARE THIS ARTICLE: [Del.icio.us](#) [Facebook](#) [Digg](#) [Reddit](#) [Newsvine](#) [What's this?](#)

FRANKLIN — Private information about thousands of Williamson County school children was posted on a personal Web site almost a year ago, but school officials didn't realize it until they learned that a Web-surfing child found evidence of the breach in late June.

The discovery of the security violation, which could involve as many as 17,000 students and faculty members, has caused a furor among parents whose children have been affected. The greatest concern is for [identity](#) theft because of the large amount of personal information divulged on the site. That information has been taken down.

"I have read a lot of horror stories about kids whose Social Security numbers were used," said Janette Bodor of Brentwood, who got an automated call Wednesday evening from Williamson County Schools informing her that her children's identity may have been compromised online. "They find out at 16 years old they have terrible [credit](#)."

District officials will hold a news conference this morning at 11 to provide parents with more details about the breach. They hope also to give parents options to protect their children's identity.

Linda Foley, a specialist in child identity theft, urged parents to stay vigilant about the possible misuse of a child's Social Security number, but

said identity theft isn't likely in this case.

"Unless someone knew that posting was there, they weren't looking for it in the first place and it probably went unnoticed," said Foley, founder of San Diego-based Identity Theft Resource Center.

She acknowledged, however, that the problem of identity theft among children has become more prominent in recent months.

"This has got to be a parent's worst nightmare," Foley said.

Privacy Site Cites Breach

For Bodor, it definitely was a disturbing discovery. After receiving the call Wednesday, she went to the Internet and found her older daughter's name on a consumer protection Web site that indicated the girl's Social Security number had been exposed for two months last year.

The site that Bodor found, [ssnbreach.org](#), is produced by the Liberty Coalition, a Washington-based nonprofit group that champions privacy and civil liberties.

The coalition's site reports that "about 17,000 Tennessee K-12 students and the names of several hundred

Expert: [Don't flag child's file](#)

RELATED NEWS FROM THE WEB

- [Internet](#)
- [Family](#)
- [Science / Technology](#)
- [Privacy](#)
- [Kids](#)
- Powered by [Topix.net](#)

More Nashville Area News Headlines

- (No heading) (38)
- [Relatives of missing man find buried foot](#) (5)
- [Police seek clues in East Nashville slaying](#) (10)
- [Nearly 2,000 ask Metro for help with expenses](#)
- [Rezoning foes lose chamber backing](#) (11)

ADVERTISEMENT



teachers were posted on a personal Web site" in three separate files, which included names, birth dates, gender, test scores and Social Security numbers.

Employee Uploaded Files

The site names Chris Nugent, the Williamson County Schools assessment specialist, as having placed the files online in an attempt to transfer the data from one computer to another, thinking the information was encrypted. But the files were "cached," or indexed, by [search engines](#). The site says that all the files have since been purged.

Jason Golden, lawyer for Williamson County Schools, acknowledged that Nugent mistakenly uploaded the information for a graduate studies project. As assessment specialist, Nugent had access to the information, but uploading it violates federal education privacy law.

Director of Schools Becky Sharber can recommend Nugent's dismissal to the school board, but that hasn't been determined, Golden said.

"It's a serious breach, from our perspective," Golden said. "The number-one goal is to figure out first the impact on students. Then, employee and employer relationships."

Golden said the district was considering providing some kind of credit-protection service.

A call to Nugent's home had not been returned by press time Thursday. A news release posted on the Web quotes Nugent as saying, "I cannot express to you enough that I believed I had taken every precaution to maintain strict security procedures and secure all information."

Student Discovered It

Ironically, it was a child surfing the Internet who found the Liberty Coalition site and brought the information to parents. The parents subsequently contacted administrators, who acknowledged learning about the problem on June 26.

Parents received e-mails and an automated telephone call about the incident from Director of Schools Becky Sharber around 7 p.m. Wednesday.

"Every concern a parent has is a reasonable concern," Golden said.

Carol Birdsong, a district spokeswoman, said the rumor mill had led to misinformation. She also said the Liberty Coalition's Web site wasn't completely accurate in suggesting that information on as many as 17,000 students may have been involved. The district believes the figure to be around 3,000 students, she said.

Sharber said in her telephone call that Social Security numbers were given for about 15 percent of the students.

No personal information was released about teachers, Golden said.

Representatives of the coalition could not be reached Thursday.

'Oh, No, Not Again'

Williamson County parent Lori Murphy, who was the victim of an identity theft that twice drained her checking account, said the news that their son's personal data might be exposed was a shock. She and her husband couldn't help but think, "Oh, no, not again."

She said she planned to check her son's credit information as soon as possible. Even so, she had questions about what really happened last year, and why it took so long to let parents know.

"You wonder who had the information and had seen it and didn't tell anyone," she said. "There are a lot of blurry lines."

Contact Maria Giordano at 771-5425 or email mgiordano@tennessean.com. Reporters Kevin Walters and Charles Booth contributed to this report.

In Your Voice

READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY

Newest first



noahlittle wrote:

Can *anybody* be trusted with your personal information? Half of the places that you give this information to are so flippant with it. For example, I've been asked numerous times to give my bank account to the teller while at a crowded bank. They expect me to give it verbally. Where anybody in the bank might overhear!

I've seen many more examples of carelessness. And then you have to consider whether the person you're entrusting with your sensitive information is trustworthy or not? Half of the time I wouldn't trust that person to tie their own shoes, but I'm in a situation where I must give them my personal information.

And now it seems that everywhere you turn, somebody needs your personal information. I'm just waiting for the day when the guy at the theatre says (loudly): "And what was your social, sir?"

It's gotten so I think I'm going to start walking around with a T-shirt that has all my personal information printed on it. At least then I'd know who to blame when my info got into the wrong hands. (maybe)

And don't even suggest that I should buy insurance for this. The very idea is ludicrous. As if I didn't already pay enough premiums, now I need to insure myself against ID theft? A threat that never really existed until the last 10 years or so? I'd feel better if all of the ID thieves banded together and forced me to pay protection money. It wouldn't be much different.

7/11/2008 1:14:15 PM

[Recommend](#) [New post](#) [Reply to this Post](#) [Report Abuse](#)



[opinions2008](#) wrote:

I am ticked off. I know that Mr. Nugent probably did not mean to do this but by not reporting it, he gave potential identity thieves almost one year to do what they wanted. From my understanding, anyone could have stumbled across this website. The information was up for 2 months and google had archived it. If he had simply reported it, parents could have issued a possible fraud alert for all students involved. What they also are not telling you is that if your child is under 13, which most of these students are, you cannot go to annualcreditreport.com and get a copy of your child's credit report. You have to mail a copy of their birth certificate, social security card, the parents drivers license and a copy of a current utility bill to the credit bureau. I am not thrilled with the thought of putting all that info in one envelope and mailing it. Mail can and does get lost. I understand this is for the child's protection, but it would be safer to fax this. Can you do that? Who knows? The 3 major credit bureaus only have automated phone lines. I tried yesterday to get someone live on the phone with no luck. If you push 0, it disconnects you. If you don't choose an option, it just gives you a mail address. If you do choose to mail this, it will take weeks to get a response. There has to be a better option for the parents of students involved.

7/11/2008 10:23:51 AM

[Recommend \(1\)](#) [New post](#) [Reply to this Post](#) [Report Abuse](#)



[mygoodness](#) wrote:

It's my understanding that when you fill out forms, that you do not have to fill out the whole SS #, only the last 4 digits. It's your legal right to protect your SS #.

7/11/2008 10:13:27 AM

[Recommend](#) [New post](#) [Reply to this Post](#) [Report Abuse](#)



[Impacted](#) wrote:

There are a couple of items very disconcerting here. First, it appears that the Williamson County Schools have no policy to protect personal identifiable information. Why was this data not encrypted? Why were downloads of this information allowed? Is there a training program done by the school district instructing employees about protecting personal identifiable information. Secondly, how do you explain the gap in time from October 2, 2007 when the Liberty Coalition sent disclosure press releases detailing this breach to July 9, 2008 when the story broke out on Channel 2 news? I do not buy the argument that WC schools did not learn of this until July 9. I am suspicious of a coverup brewing.

7/11/2008 10:02:49 AM

[Recommend \(1\)](#) [New post](#) [Reply to this Post](#) [Report Abuse](#)

[1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) >> [Last](#)

[FULL PAGE VIEW](#) See more comments per page and quote other replies

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Login](#) | [Register](#)

3000 characters left

Submit

Top Jobs



Top Jobs

Property Manager

- US-TN-Nashville
- Line Cooks, Line Servers, Utility, Cashiers
- Thompson Hospitality- Fisk University
- US-TN-Nashville
- Trucking Job Fair
- Transam Trucking
- US-TN-Nashville
- Senior Business Analyst
- Bridgestone Americas Holding
- US-TN-Nashville
- Job Fair
- Complete CareGivers
- US-TN-Nashville

Top Cars



2003 Land Rover Discovery SE. \$13,900. Black, automatic, 70,300 miles.



Top Homes



\$685,000, 3 bedroom, 2 1/2 bath, 2,915 square feet, MLS# 976651



Advertisements

TAPE 2 DVD

GET YOUR OLD 8 MM & SUPER 8 HOME MOVIES TRANSFERRED TO DVD TODAY!
WWW.TAPE2DVDONLINE.COM

Ed's Rover Service

Middle Tennessee's only independent Land Rover Service Center.
Visit us at: www.edsrover.com



Partners: Jobs: CareerBuilder.com Cars: Cars.com Apartments: Apartments.com Shopping: ShopLocal.com

Home | News | Communities | Entertainment | Sports | Shopping | Moms | Life | Voices & Views | Classifieds | Obituaries | Customer Service | Site Map

Terms of Service | Privacy Policy | Contact Us | About Us | Work for Us | Subscribe

Copyright © 2008 The Tennessean. All rights reserved
Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy , updated March 2007.