

Can Your Identity Be Stolen From Your Resume?

October 26, 2016 - You've probably never applied for a job and wondered whether or not your resume could be used to steal your identity. And even if you have wondered, is there really anything you could have done about the threat? After all, you need to provide a resume to virtually any prospective employer to be considered for employment. But you have no idea who within an organization will actually see your information or what they will do with it.

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(function() {
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s.type = 'text/javascript';
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
s1.parentNode.insertBefore(s, s1);
})();
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})();
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Unlike years gone by, most people today provide their resume to employers via the internet. In many cases, job seekers store their resume online with one, or several, job sites. The one thing that all resumes have in common is that they contain personally identifiable information. Once that information is set free on the internet, you lose control over it. Therefore, you need to be careful with the type of information your resume contains. This is especially true for anyone using employment websites.

Over the years, I've seen a good number of resumes that contain social security numbers. That's a huge mistake.

Prospective employers don't need your SSN to review your employment history. The same is true for your date of birth. If your resume is going to be supplied along with a job application, then there is no reason to include your address on the resume either. If you are storing a resume online and it contains all of these pieces of information, it's pretty much game-over if a hacker gains access to it or if there is some other form of data breach. It provides an identity thief with everything needed to impersonate you.

This isn't a hypothetical situation. There is an investigation going on in England right now because a job applicant at Virgin Media inadvertently stumbled onto a flaw in the company's employment system. He found that when he uploaded his resume, he also gained access to the resumes of approximately 50,000 other current and former job applicants to the company.

At present, nobody believes that the flaw in Virgin Media's website has led to identity theft. But they are just one company. Every time you upload personal information to the internet, it is at risk. And every company has different procedures and protocols for protecting your information. Some of them are better at it than others. Because of this, it would be wise to minimize the personally identifiable information you include. Your name, phone number and email address are all the employer needs to get additional information from you.

by Jim Malmberg

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