

Embargo Tuesday 29 October 2002
Spy vs Spy: the science of surveillance and security
Session 3: 11.20am Fraud squad

Presentation: The paper chase
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- *key words/applications: fraud, identification, security*

Fake identity is the real thing

Recent Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) estimates place fraud and misappropriation offences in Australia in the range of \$3 billion to \$3.5 billion, proving a 1998 (AIC) report correctly predicted that a 'fraud epidemic' was imminent in Australia.

Information from local financial institutions and other organisations confirms that the prevalence and severity of identity fraud is rapidly increasing.

Intelligence reports indicate that identity fraud in Australia has become commonplace and can be described as a foundation for many other forms of criminal activity.

Identity fraud is a major enabler in many crimes, such as:

- terrorism
- people smuggling
- illegal immigration
- tax evasion
- money laundering, and
- financial fraud.

Internet

The internet has made identity fraud even more prevalent.

US Government enforcement officials estimate that 30 percent of all fake IDs now come from the web. Research in 2000 by a US Senate Subcommittee found over 60 websites that offered false identification documents.

US experience

In the mid 90s the number of identity fraud complaints to the US government, business and consumer groups began to explode.

In 1992 35,000 people called the credit reporting agency Trans Union with questions or complaints about identity theft. In 1997, calls numbered more than 523,000. According to the U.S. Secret Service, in 1997 identity theft cost consumers and financial institutions US\$745 million

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Profile

James Brandi is the Team Leader of the Document Examination Team within Forensic Services, Australian Federal Police (AFP).

He is a Registered Forensic Practitioner who has over 12 years experience in forensic science and has worked for Victoria Police at the Victoria Forensic Science Centre.

Mr Brandi holds a BSc(Hons) with a double chemistry major, from La Trobe University in 1991 and has had scientific papers published in international journals such as the Journal of Forensic Document Examination and the International Journal of Forensic Document Examiners.

He has been a member of the ANZFSS since 1991 and has held the offices of ANZFSS Victorian Vice President 1997-99, and Secretary in 1996.

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