

## Protecting yourself in the digital age

Most of Australia's library and information professionals are well aware of the Government's campaigns promoting good cyber security practices and educating children particularly about handling those very modern problems of cyber bullying and stalking. Hundreds of libraries promote these messages every year and ALIA is a supporting partner of the

Government's Cyber Awareness programs. Increasingly though, we are also being warned about the perils of identity theft as

we live our lives via our iPads and laptops.

You may have heard already about the scam in which your friends are emailed, supposedly by you, that you are stuck in some remote place in urgent need of funds to get home. An ALIA member was

recently targeted with this very scam, with his friends and neighbours being told he was stuck in Manila. He has smart – and kind – neighbours because they checked before acting on 'his' request to send money via Western Union.

This particular scam was the handiwork of identity thieves. As well as producing the frightening emails

requesting urgent assistance, the scam includes spyware that retrieves email files in their entirety, netting copies of your online shopping orders, eBay activity, resumes in emailed job applications,

e-payslips, and whatever else you have been carefully keeping. This is one instance when your information management training can mean you are making it just too easy for an identity thief.

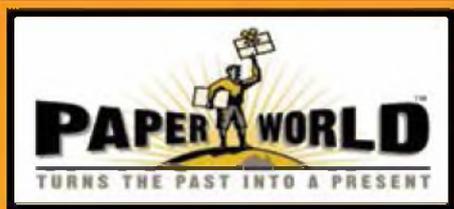
The Attorney-General's website at [www.ag.gov.au/identitysecurity](http://www.ag.gov.au/identitysecurity) has a wide range of resources for individuals and for LIS workplaces to use to promote identity protection, including downloadable booklets and posters.

The Government counsels frequent password changes and a complete change of bank details if you have the slightest suspicion of a problem. It's also important to report any incidences of identity theft to the department or agency that issued you with that document. This will help protect you from any unauthorised use later. And advising your bank means there is a record in their system too – though the banks are getting somewhat better at identifying unusual patterns of credit card use or account activity, once you have lodged a report, you have a measure of protection.

For more information on what to do about lost, stolen or found identity documents, visit the Attorney-General's website – and share that information around with your library or information service's patrons.

Lee Welch

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