

## Stolen Identities

**OU students are vulnerable to crime that is steadily increasing**

By **REBECCA WYATT**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Students on campus are vulnerable to a serious crime. That crime is identity theft. In 2003, more than 9.9 million people were the victims of identity theft in the U.S., and according to the Office of the Inspector General's Web site, it is one of the fastest growing crimes.

The Web site classifies identity theft as someone else using a victim's "personally identifying information" without the victim's knowledge or permission. This information can be used to get credit cards, cell phones, loans and even commit crimes.

The victim is held responsible and it could hinder his or her ability to build credit, or even a future.

Students aren't the only targets. Tiger Woods and Oprah Winfrey have been the victims of identity theft. As high profile figures, their names have been used to obtain credit.

However, OU students are espe-

cially vulnerable.

This is because almost 98 percent of OU students continue to use their social security numbers as student identification numbers. According to Registrar Steve Shablin, only 400 students use OU's system of randomly generated student ID numbers.

This means this number is flashed around campus and other students can see it. That makes it really easy for someone to steal a student's identity.

The Oakland Post recently proved how easy this is.

An editor walked into a room where students sign out equipment using a student ID number. With this number and the student's name, the editor was able to look up the student's address on the OU Web page. The only thing missing was the birthdate. For about \$40, this information can be purchased regarding another person.

From there it would be easy for any thief to apply for a credit

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Margaret Pasikowski/The Oakland Post

An OU Bookstore employee checks the ID of customer Kendra Saunders since she is paying by credit card. It's part of the Bookstore's way to prevent fraud.

## Money woes

Nearly 100 students recently found out they still owed money to OU for this semester's tuition.

According to Ted Montgomery, director of Media Relations, the students were all registered for a variable credit course, meaning they could choose the value of the class based on the amount of time they intend to dedicate.

Due to a glitch in the billing/scheduling program, Montgomery said the students weren't billed the full amount.

Montgomery said the students received letters dated Nov. 9 that explained they owed the balance of the tuition. He said the students owed anywhere between \$100-\$1,500.

The university is taking responsibility for the error in billing and will not penalize the students for late payments.

Montgomery said students affected by the billing glitch would not be prevented from getting transcripts, registering for classes or graduating.

He said the few students having problems paying the amount are working with Student Accounts to set up payment plans.

By **REBECCA WYATT**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

## Legislator gets new gig

By **ELIZABETH GORECKI**  
SENIOR NEWS WRITER

The Student Activities Funding Board (SAFB) has a new chair.

Sophomore Michael McGuinness was selected by OU Student Congress President Jonathan Parks and Vice President Kenton Lewis to fill the position, which has been vacant since Roxanne Gibson was terminated in September.

"We're confident we selected a person who will work hard for the students," Parks said.

McGuinness is no stranger to the OUSC or on-campus organizations. Besides being an OUSC legislator, McGuinness is the President of the Gay/Straight Alliance, an AmeriCorps Oakland volunteer and is involved with the OU Leadership Program.

He said because of his involvement on campus, he knows how difficult it is for organizations to get money

fairly, as well as to organize and plan events.

McGuinness said that since there were no guidelines in place, allocations were not always fair in the past. He is working on putting together guidelines so this will no longer be a problem.

"It's important to have stability and continuity so events are better planned and run," McGuinness said. "We're working on guidelines that will be fair and equitable for all."

These guidelines will be crucial for the future of the SAFB, he said.

"They'll serve as a set policy for standard procedures," McGuinness said. "They have the potential for sticking."

McGuinness said it is important to get guidelines written and approved soon so that the SAFB can focus on other aspects of its job, such as helping organizations find contacts, as well as helping to plan and run events.



Laura Angus/The Oakland Post

Mike McGuinness steps in to fill role of Funding Board Chair.

McGuinness is happy with his new position and feels he is up for the challenge.

Even though McGuinness has only been the chair for a little over a week, he is already working hard.

"He seems to be handling business," Lewis said. McGuinness said, "It's a hard job and I'm up for it."

## OUSC informed of OC changes

By **VIRGINIE PEROV**  
THE OAKLAND POST

Richard Fekel, director of the Oakland Center, addressed the OU Student Congress (OUSC) on Nov. 24 to report on the improvements made in the past year to the OC.

Fekel reminded the audience of the many updates, including the replacement of the carpeting in the food court, the painting of the walls and the renovation of the 10,000 square foot kitchen. Also new in the OC is the 24-hour computer area located in the Café O'Bears, which is accessible by swiping a student ID card at the door.

"We are trying to get back into the routine after all these changes," Fekel said. "From what I hear, the students seem pleased."

In the past eight years, the OC has seen a great deal of additions, renovations and

expansions, and according to Fekel, it is not over yet.

"The Gold Room and other adjacent rooms are in dire need of renovation," Fekel said.

He also mentioned a potential expansion of the bookstore.

On the Fireside Lounge topic, Fekel expressed the need to hold more appropriate programs there.

"Loud events or big crowds can be disruptive," Fekel said. "Coordinators are invited to use different rooms."

He pointed out the new upstairs area of the OC and promised with the new signs, everyone will get more familiar with the space.

"As for the old furniture, it was just too old," Fekel said.

Some students have complained that these new chairs and couches are not as suitable for lying down and taking naps. But Fekel explained the

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## Kresge survives 2003 without vendor

By **KIMBERLY GARCIA**  
THE OAKLAND POST

Each year, Kresge Library stocks its shelves with between 1,500 and 2,000 journals, magazines and newspapers to aid student research.

This year, that continuous flow of periodicals was interrupted when Kresge's vendor, RoweCom, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in late January.

Mildred Merz, Collection Development coordinator for Kresge, said news of the bankruptcy reached her desk in December of 2002, just one month before the 2003 subscriptions were expected and four months after disbursing the last check. Subscriptions are renewed each year in September.

According to Merz, OU paid RoweCom a total of \$500,000 for the January to December 2003 subscrip-

tions.

In turn, RoweCom paid out approximately \$50,000 to the individual publishers, translating to a 75 percent drop in new periodicals for 2003.

Kresge was not the only library affected. Many libraries relied on RoweCom to fill all of their subscription orders, including OU. As a result, libraries across the country feared none of their orders would be filled and publishers feared they would never see their money.

OU's legal department has filed a claim in the bankruptcy and at some point may see the remainder of their money when it is settled, "but even still we expect a small amount," said Merz.

Lauren White, freshman, said she was upset by the overall situation.

"It's unfair to students, especially if teachers are

expecting you to get information," she said.

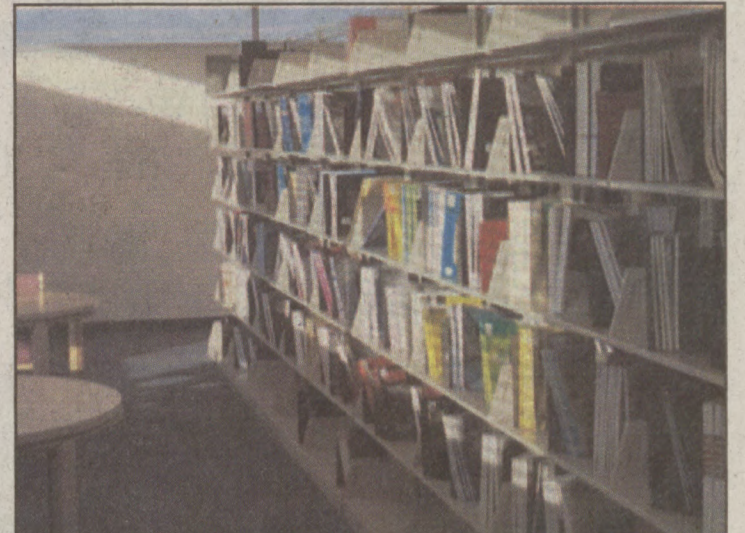
Despite the bankruptcy's far-reaching effects, Kresge has weathered a lot of the storm thanks to the goodwill of publishers and other libraries.

"Many publishers agreed to grace the libraries even though the publications were not getting paid, especially scientific journals, and many libraries that had a surplus of publications sent over their duplicates," said Merz.

The goodwill was not limited to outside sources. Many librarians and even professors took up the slack by generously donating their own publications, said Merz.

The Dean of the Library brought in her own Wall Street Journal, and Professor Robert Eberwein dropped off many of his film journals.

While there are still



David Killkenney/The Oakland Post

The archives are growing again after the periodical vendor declared bankruptcy, leaving the library scrambling.

many gaps in the overall supply of publications, students appear shielded from the full impact of the loss.

Rianna Amolsch, senior, said she has been lucky and experienced no gaps in any of the journals she has needed.

Jennifer Trpevski, sophomore, said she had no problems locating any of the information she needed.

Another reason students have not felt the full brunt of this shortage is that many journals are now

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The Oakland Post wishes all our readers happy and safe holidays. We will resume production on January 7, 2004. Good luck on finals!