

# Monthly Columns

by Attorney General Jack Conway



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Recently, a hacker gained access to the names, addresses, email addresses, phone numbers and partial credit card numbers of 24 million Zappos.com customers, who now risk having their identities stolen and personal financial accounts compromised. I am currently working with the attorneys general from nine other states to find out more information about the Zappos.com security breach, adequacy of their security practices and efforts to protect consumers in the wake of the attack.

The average out-of-pocket cost for an individual who is a victim of identity theft is \$631, according to Javelin Strategy & Research. Identity theft remains one of the fastest-growing crimes in the U.S. Last year, more than 30 million records containing sensitive personal information were involved in data breaches as a result of hacking, malware, or lost or stolen equipment, according to the national Privacy Rights Clearinghouse. In addition to the cost to consumers, the average cost of a data breach for a business is \$7.2 million.

As Attorney General, I want to ensure that businesses and consumers are doing all they can to protect personal data on the Internet. The following steps can help ensure that you don't unintentionally compromise your personal information and your safety.

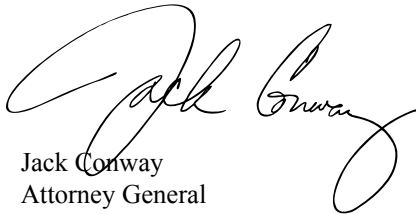
- Don't store credit card information online. What you give up in convenience, you will gain in security.
- Only do business with companies that offer secure payment processing.
- Check your privacy settings on social networking sites, such as Facebook.
- Configure your wireless router to encrypt data.
- Be sure to have a firewall installed and enabled on your computer.
- Don't assume public hot spots are secure.
- Think before you post and never post information about your vacation plans.

Zappos customers affected by the data security

breach, should change passwords or login IDs for other accounts, beware of "phishing scams," which may come in the form of emails that look like they are from Zappos, and monitor financial accounts, billing statements and credit reports for accuracy.

Unfortunately, Kentucky is one of four states without security breach notification laws. I pushed for identity theft protection legislation during my first term and will continue to support efforts to bring Kentucky laws up-to-date with our modern law enforcement challenges.

For more information on protecting yourself online, please visit my "Cybersafety in Kentucky" website at <http://ag.ky.gov/cybersafety>.



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