

Who – What – When – Where – Why ?**Rogers data on clients found in lot**

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A Toronto resident found hundreds of Rogers order forms – complete with names, addresses, phone numbers, driver's licence numbers and, in a few cases, what appear to be credit card and SIN numbers – tucked behind a coffee shop and strewn across a parking lot and park on Mutual St. in downtown Toronto yesterday.

A random check of some names and numbers on work orders for both cable and Internet services found that some clients had had the work done a number of years ago. In some cases they no longer lived at the address.

Some order forms were dated March 2002. One order dated back seven or eight years, according to one of the clients reached at home.

The very idea her personal information was found in an alleyway in downtown Toronto incensed Jin Xu, who had Rogers install basic cable and high-speed Internet at her former home in Etobicoke more than five years ago.

She has since moved to Mississauga. But her work order for that installation – with her name, telephone number and driver's licence number – was among the scores of forms.

"It is outrageous and annoying," she said in a phone interview with the Toronto Star. "Nowadays there are so many cases of identity theft – a few years ago I had a problem with my credit cards at my old address. It just makes me wonder ... It's outrageous how someone is not treating your personal information in the right way. Nobody cares about our private information."

Identity fraud is a multi-million-dollar business in Canada – and one of the fastest growing. The RCMP anti-fraud call centre received 7,778 complaints about identity theft last year and victims' losses totalled about \$16.3 million. Only recently, CIBC and retail giant TJX Cos., which operates Winners and Home Sense, had a problem with identity theft.

All a criminal needs is a name, a credit card number or a social insurance number or other personal information to open bank accounts, get new credit cards, rent cars, get cell phone service or buy just about anything.

That's why Gordon Bobbitt, a retired social worker, was so upset with what he found yesterday morning.

He said he first noticed the papers on Thursday. From his apartment window he could see hundreds of them scattered across the parking lot and park. They appeared to have come from a big cardboard box, ruined by snow, he said.

He didn't think anything of it until yesterday morning when a city street cleaning vacuum machine came by and removed most of the litter. But there was still some left in the park just under his window and Bobbitt went down to investigate and clean up the debris. He said he was just being "a nosy senior."

To his dismay he found scores of completed Rogers order forms for cable and Internet service.

"It's sort of scary," said Bobbitt. "I was surprised when I saw that it was Rogers. I was really worried when I saw there was credit card numbers and telephone numbers and driver's licence numbers.

"The question is how did it get here? It's worrisome because a company the size of Rogers I would think they would have a system for getting rid of such information."

When Bobbitt went back to the alley to explain to a Star photographer and reporter what he had seen and show where the papers were, he discovered more forms tucked away underneath a fire escape just behind a coffee shop.

He scooped them up, worried about the information getting into the wrong hands.

The Star took some of the forms and Bobbitt held on to the rest. The Star returned the original documents it had in its possession to Rogers after being asked.

"The best I can tell you is it sounds like they are old records and they were on their way to be destroyed," said Taanta Gupta, VP communications for Rogers. "Clearly something went wrong.

"This is not information that should have ended up where it did."

Rogers said it will immediately begin an internal investigation into how the documents ended up on the street.

On its website Rogers states it has "in place privacy and security practices to safeguard our customers' personal information. These practices are reviewed, and if necessary revised, on a regular basis.

"Additionally, Rogers' employees receive privacy training and must comply with Rogers' privacy practices as a condition of employment."