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Communicate

KEEPING YOUR PRIVATE INFORMATION 'PRIVATE'

Working online, chatting online and posting online are things we all take for granted nowadays. It is so quick and easy. Often we are asked to provide information to third parties, such as a CV or other personal information, in support of a job application. But we must try and make sure that important information – our name, address, phone, email and of course banking details are kept private. There are a lot of sharks lurking in the internet ocean. They lie in the depths and take bytes from your personal information – this is identity fraud or theft.

In 2007, there were approximately 65,000 victims of identity theft in the UK. The Metropolitan Police estimate that identity fraud costs the UK £1.3 billion a year.

Sharks go phishing for snippets of personal information, such as your mother's maiden name, and they combine them with other information about you so they can get credit in your name and generally commit financial fraud.

So what has this got to do with searching for a job? Many of us post our CV to a company online and barely think about where it goes or who reads it. Did you send it securely by protecting your contact details? Think about it for a moment: where else would you include so much detailed information about yourself but on a CV? We accept that we need personal identification numbers and passwords for money transactions, but most of us do not think twice about sending out personal information. If you include information about yourself, such as your date and place of birth, marital status, passport number and even national insurance number, fraudsters may be able to apply for a credit card in your name. If you include contact details of referees they may well do the same to them!

Some sharks masquerade as recruiters so they can get information about people. One of the ways to protect yourself is to check that the 'recruiting site' is legitimate – do they have a privacy policy? Are they offering a real job? Think about this – do the jobs they are offering sound genuine? Are they promising – 'a dream job' for a 'major company'? Be wary of companies that promise the earth or who ask for money up front.

The most important thing to remember is: anything could happen to the CV you posted on line. You have no control over where it ends up or who uses it. The Met says: 'Do not post personal details on the internet which could collectively be used to clone your identity'.

¹ www.met.police.uk/fraudalert/section/identity_fraud.htm