



News

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Stolen computer contains credit card data for 80,000 US government staff - WSJ

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US police authorities are investigating the theft of a computer containing the credit card data of 80,000 Justice Department employees from the headquarters of Omega World Travel, which handles business travel arrangements for the department, according to a Wall Street Journal report.

According to the report, federal and local authorities were alerted of the theft three weeks ago. The computer, which was stolen from Omega's HQ in Fairfax, near Washington, contained password-protected names and credit card account numbers. JPMorgan Chase and Bank One are monitoring the accounts for suspicious activity.

The Justice Department has been notifying employees of the theft and asking them to monitor accounts and cancel credit cards if they see any suspicious activity. Justice Department spokeswoman Gina Talamona told the WSJ that no personal addresses, social security numbers or office locations were stored on the missing computer and there hadn't been any indication of "improper activity" on the cards so far.

However, the computer also contains employee traveller profiles which are likely to include home addresses, telephone numbers and passport numbers.

The incident is the latest in a series of thefts of computers containing personal financial data. In November last year four computers containing confidential customer data about thousands of Wells Fargo customers were stolen from the Atlanta offices of document processing vendor Regulus Integrated Solutions. In a separate incident in November 2003, a computer containing confidential financial data for some of Wells Fargo personal line and loan customers was stolen from the office of an analysts hired by the bank.

Furthermore, in December last year Bank of America "lost" computer tapes containing charge card account information for 1.2 million government card holders during transfer to a backup data centre.
