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## **IDENTITY THEFT JUST A MOUSE CLICK AWAY!**

Would you put your tax returns and your medical records on eBay? Apparently, many people have been doing just that, without realizing it," Dr. Keith B. Darrell, author of the new book, *Issues in Internet Law: Society, Technology, and the Law*, warned.

There is an enormous amount of personal information sitting in used computer hard drives donated to schools or placed on eBay. If the hard drive is not wiped clean then the data still remain on the drive and may be easily retrieved. Even files placed in the Windows Recycle Bin and deleted may often be recovered with special file recovery software. "It's a treasure trove for identity thieves," Darrell said. In his book, *Issues in Internet Law*, Darrell recounts how, after Montana donated its state computers to schools, an audit disclosed that eight of the donated computers still contained 386 Social Security numbers, financial records for 182 people, 84 business files, and job applicant information.

Computers at schools, businesses, and doctor's offices all contain highly personal information ranging from financial data to medical histories, all of which often remain on the hard drives when the computers are donated or placed on eBay. Darrell cites a recent study that found confidential or personal data was left on 113 of 200 hard drives purchased on eBay.

"And computers belonging to individuals may contain everything from passwords and bank account numbers to e-mailed love letters and personal diaries," Darrell said. In his book, *Issues in Internet Law: Society, Technology, and the Law*, Darrell offers tips to thwart identity thieves.

"*Issues in Internet Law: Society, Technology, and the Law* has an entire chapter devoted to cyber crimes because it is such a hot issue right now," Darrell said. "If that one chapter saves someone's bank account, then I think the book has paid for itself!"

*Issues in Internet Law: Society, Technology, and the Law* is available in softcover (ISBN 978-1-935971-30-6) and hardcover (ISBN 978-1-935971-31-3) editions. through the [IssuesInInternetLaw.com](http://IssuesInInternetLaw.com) website or through [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and Barnes and Noble ([BN.com](http://BN.com)). An electronic version may be downloaded from VitalSource at <http://store.vitalsource.com/show/978-1-935971-AB-C>.