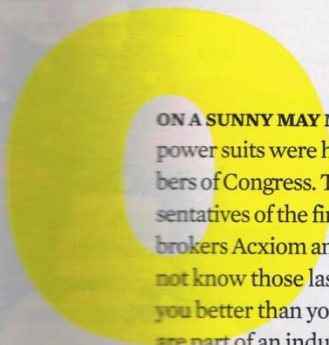


what  
no one  
is telling  
you  
about

# identity theft

- 1** | The thieves aren't who you think.
- 2** | Your data can never be fully safe.
- 3** | But ID theft can be stopped once and for all. Here's how.



**O**N A SUNNY MAY MORNING ON CAPITOL HILL, power suits were hard at work spinning members of Congress. There to testify were representatives of the financial giant Visa and of data brokers Acxiom and Thomson West. You may not know those last two outfits, but they know you better than you could ever imagine. Both are part of an industry that gathers personal data about millions of Americans and sells it to lenders, retailers, employers, government

agencies or other parties. The speakers delivered much the same message: Don't worry; we're committed to keeping you and your most sensitive information safe from cyberpredators.

"Visa aggressively protects the cardholder information of its members," lobbyist Oliver Ireland stated in his testimony. And here's Acxiom executive Jennifer Barrett: "We employ a world-class information-security staff to help us fend off criminals."

by Michael Sivy | Pat Regnier | and Carolyn Bigda

illustration by Daniel Bejar