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Interac Association



121 King Street West, Suite 1905, C.P. 109, Toronto (Ontario) M5H 3T9. Tel. : (416) 362-8550

Survey Shows Canadians Not Shielding Their Debit Card PIN Regularly

Canadians Encouraged to Protect PIN Even When Alone

October 19, 2006 – (Toronto, ON) – Most Canadians recognize the importance of shielding their Personal Identification Number (PIN) at a bank machine or at the store checkout terminal, but the majority are still not protecting their PIN all of the time.

According to a survey* commissioned by Interac Association, and conducted by The Strategic Counsel, 92 per cent of Canadians recognize the importance of shielding their PIN at a bank machine or a debit card terminal. However, 60 per cent do not always shield their PIN if they believe nobody can see them entering it, and 37 per cent do not always shield their PIN even if they believe somebody can see them entering it.

“Debit card fraud has evolved since the days of shoulder surfing, so whether somebody can see your PIN or not, cardholders should always protect their PIN when conducting a transaction,” said LeAnne Thorfinnson, VP, Operations, Interac Association. “Canadians love to use their debit cards and with the holiday shopping period fast approaching, Interac Association would like to remind cardholders that shielding their PIN is the single most important thing that they can do to reduce their chances of becoming a target of fraud.”

Criminals need two pieces of information to commit debit card fraud – the PIN and the magnetic stripe information on the card. If cardholders shield their PIN at all times, they make it more difficult for criminals to capture this key security feature.

Interac Association has one of the most secure networks in the world, in which 99.99 per cent of all transactions are conducted without issue. While debit card fraud represents only a fraction of one percent of total transactions, the Association takes fraud very seriously and works closely with members to keep the services secure and to protect cardholders. Behind the scenes Interac Association and its members work closely with law enforcement and industry partners to monitor, detect and prevent debit card fraud.

“Through partnership, we’re committed to doing all we can to drive debit card fraud out of Canada,” said Thorfinnson. “While Interac Association works with members, industry partners and law enforcement to monitor fraudulent activity and prevent debit card fraud, cardholders can also play a part in this fight against fraud.”

Cardholders are protected by the *Canadian Code of Practice for Consumer Debit Card Services*, which ensures that all proven victims of debit card fraud will not suffer any financial losses. Cardholders can help keep their money safe by following these important tips:

- Use your hand or body to shield your PIN when you are conducting transactions at an Automated Banking Machine (ABM) or at the checkout.
- Keep your banking card in sight when conducting transactions at the checkout.
- Check your banking statements regularly and contact your financial institution immediately if you detect any unusual activity, e.g. purchases you did not make or missing charges.
- If your debit card is lost, stolen or retained by an ABM, notify your financial institution immediately.
- Memorize your PIN. Only you should know your PIN. If you suspect that someone knows your PIN, even a friend or family member, change it immediately.
- When selecting your PIN, never use obvious information, such as, your telephone number, date of birth, address or Social Insurance Number. These numbers are often stored in the same place as your banking card enabling criminals to easily guess your PIN.

Merchants can help prevent debit card fraud from happening at their locations by:

- Inspecting their terminal stations regularly for any signs of irregularities.
- Storing the PIN pad safely when not in use – merchants should treat their devices like cash.
- Working with their Merchant Service Provider to determine what steps they can take to prevent debit card fraud.

About Interac Association

Formed in 1984, Interac Association is a not-for-profit organization composed of 95 members which include: banks, trust companies, credit unions, caisses populaires, technology and payment related companies. Interac Association is responsible for the development of the national network for two shared electronic financial services: *Interac* Direct Payment, Canada's national debit card service and *Interac* Shared Cash Dispensing Service for cash withdrawals at Automated Banking Machines.

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For more information, please contact:

Tina Romano
Interac Association
416-869-5062

Mandy Plaizier
Strategic Objectives
416-366-7735 ext. 254

Mike Abbass
Strategic Objectives
416-366-7735 ext. 237

*A telephone omnibus survey was administered on September 14-17, 2006 to a nationally representative sample of 1000 Canadians. A sample of this size is accurate to within ± 3.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.