Id Theft? Credit Problems? Credit Monitoring? Free Credit Reports?

ACCESS was developed to help individuals with credit questions, needs and problems. Over the the last 20 years we have monitored a trend within the Credit Reporting Industry. These trends have resulted in a pletera of new terms - Identity Theft, Sub-prime Lending, Point Scoring, and "Free" Credit Reports just to name a few.

For the first time in credit history, there are more people who know that they have a credit report than ever before. Millions of US citizens have ordered or viewed their credit reports within the few the last few years. Many look at it in amazement. Thousands have even "pretended" to be someone they are not, just to see what is there.

But the majority of us that get our own credit report are surprized and sometimes overwhelmed by what we see.

The credit report tracks our credit history for our entire life.

Your Credit File

The Header

The top portion, your name, address, and other demographic information is called your "Credit Header Information." This information can be sold for marketing credit offers.

Public Record

This details various state, federal or civil judgments that were awarded against you (meaning that you lost & you owe the monies.) Also bankruptcies are found here.

Collection Items

These are accounts that were unpaid (by you or someone that you co-signed with) and turned over to a third party collection agency. You should be able to tell who the original credit grantor was.

Tradelines

The majority of your credit report shows "tradelines", as they are called in the industry.

Tradelines report your activity with a particular credit grantor. This information includes: credit grantor name, your account number, high credit limit (how much they will give you), current balance (how much you still owe), type of account (revolving or installment), and how you pay (number of times late).

Tradelines maybe reported for up to seven years. This can vary from state to state. Usually, negative information is removed after that time, but positive information can stay on forever.

Inquiries

Inquiries are broken into three seperate catagories.

One is for the purpose of extending credit. These are inquiries that were made by businesses that you have personally visited with, and where credit MAY potentially be granted.

The next category is sometimes refered to as "soft inquiries". Here you will find names of businesses that solicited you via credit card offers.

There are also businesses that pull your account for review. You may see inquiries you have personally made on your own credit file here.

Credit Monitoring Services

Today "Credit Monitoring Services" sell themselves as a watch dog, some can even notify you if something negative has been added to your account. This service offers little support to prevent or deter thieves. Many times negative information isn't added to your credit report until months after the thief has stolen your identity. You're still holding the bag, only now you're a little poorer after paying for a worthless service.

Free Credit Reports

"Free Credit Reports" fair even worse. Some deliver your report online to who knows who. If you read the privacy policy on these services, you will see that they WILL sell your information. But they say it like this...."While information is the foundation for providing you with superior service, protecting the privacy of your personal information is of highest importance to us. We believe that responsible stewardship of the information entrusted to us is crucial in developing and maintaining the public trust essential for our continued success."....but then they say "We may disclose any of the information that we collect to our affiliated companies. " AKA WE SELL YOUR INFORMATION. Never have we seen who is their "affiliated companies". In fact, businesses like Member Works specialize in creating affiliations merely for the sharing (aka selling) of information.

While the sharing of information facilitates marketing, this sharing of information also facilities Identity Theft, and therein lies the problem. ACCESS supports "free enterprise" but not at the loss of personal freedoms. We believe that this unabased sharing of information has resulted in millions of people losing billions of dollars to fight an unseen predator.

Let me ask you, why don't these businesses say -- specifically who their affiliates are. We can tell you why, because if you knew you'd be outraged. These companies are affiliated with thousands of businesses...and each of them can get your information. So much for "public trust".

Legislators are scrambling, trying to address the publics concerns for privacy. But with each turn, big business and lobbyist are deceiving them. Each time a new law is passed, the citizens of the United States lose ground. From the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to the 2003 revisions of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, each and every time the public loses.

Our goal with ACCESS is to reverse that trend. We hope that we can provide you with information that can help you battle this or at least provide you information to level the playing ground.

If you are faced with the dauting task of trying to unravel a credit problem -- let us help you.