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## For Immediate Release

### **DON'T BE TRICKED BY SCAMS THAT USE YOUR FINANCIAL INFORMATION TO COMMIT FRAUD, URGES IDENTITY THEFT ASSISTANCE CENTER**

*Tens of thousands of consumers fall victim each month to schemes like phishing*

**WASHINGTON, DC, October 16, 2007**— The Identity Theft Assistance Center (ITAC) urges consumers to be careful when sharing personal information, and access to your financial accounts, that can be used to commit fraud and identity theft.

“Fraudsters have plenty of tactics in their bag of tricks to make you believe they are acting in your best interests,” said ITAC Executive Director Anne Wallace. “Everyone should have a healthy dose of skepticism when it comes to responding to urgent requests for personal information or access to your financial accounts.”

Wallace urges consumers to be aware of several of the most common scams:

**Phishing.** Phishing attacks use 'spoofed' e-mails to lead consumers to counterfeit websites designed to trick them into divulging financial data—such as credit card numbers, account usernames, passwords and social security numbers. Criminals use the names and logos of financial services companies to create authentic looking emails. “If you have any doubt about an email’s authenticity, contact your financial services company,” says Wallace.

**Pretexting.** Pretexting is the practice of getting your personal information under false pretenses. Pretexters sell your information to people who may use it to get credit in your name, steal your assets, or to investigate or sue you. A pretexter may call you posing as a representative of a survey firm, bank, Internet service provider, and even government agency, to get you to reveal your SSN, mother’s maiden name, drivers license number, financial account numbers and other identifying information. “The companies you do business with already have this information,” says Wallace.

**Fake Checks.** These schemes often involve the promise of great riches—such as foreign business offers and lotteries and sweepstakes. But it also includes work-at-home offers, where they ask you to help process payments by depositing checks or money orders intended for their company into your bank account. You send them the money and you keep the extra as your "pay." "There's absolutely no reason someone would give you a check or money order and ask you to wire money in return," says Wallace. For more information, see [www.fakechecks.org](http://www.fakechecks.org).

### **About ITAC**

The Identity Theft Assistance Center (ITAC) ([www.identitytheftassistance.org](http://www.identitytheftassistance.org)) is a nonprofit that fights identity theft through victim assistance, research and law enforcement partnerships. ITAC has helped thousands of consumers restore their financial identities and is the leading source of verified data on identity theft crime. Recognized internationally for its innovative model, ITAC is sponsored by The Financial Services Roundtable as part of the financial services industry's commitment to fight fraud and identity theft.

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