Chapter 4
School Districts Stumbled on Data Privacy

Irene Chen
University of Houston Downtown, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The story describes how three school institutes are grappling with the loss of private information, each through a unique set of circumstances. Pasadena City Public Schools discovered that it had sold several computers containing the names and Social Security numbers of employees as surplus. Stephens Public Schools learned that personal information about students at one of its middle schools was lost when a bag containing a thumb drive was stolen. Also, Woodlands Public Schools accidentally exposed employee personal data on a public Web site for a short period of time. How should each of the institutes react?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Most parents know that school districts request information when:

- Registering for emergency announcements.
- Providing feedback in an online survey.
- Subscribing to a newsletter or a mailing list.

Parents allow schools to collect information including names, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, addresses, types of business, genders, dates of birth, behavior and...