

# THE OBSERVER



Monthly Publication

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*Reporting Accurate and Objective Information Based on Facts, Not Theory*

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Dominic Casey | D&A Principal  
1:30 PM EST, July 22, 2009

## **Predicting Social Security Numbers**

Researchers have developed a surprisingly easy way to 'predict' the nine digits of Americans' Social Security Numbers. The ability to make the predictions is simplified using data available in public records as well as information such as birth dates provided on *Social Networks* such as *Face Book* and *MySpace*.

For people born after 1988, when the government began issuing numbers at birth, the Researchers were able to identify, in a single attempt, the first five Social Security digits for 44% of individuals and, they got all nine digits for 8.5% of those people in fewer than 1,000 attempts.

When looking at *Social Networks*, people often include their birth dates and hometowns, an integral part of the information used in issuing Social Security Numbers. So the Researchers turned to the Social Security Administration's *Death Master File*, which lists the numbers of people who have died. The purpose of making that file public is to prevent impostors from assuming the Social Security Numbers of deceased people. However, by plotting the data for people listed on the file between 1973 and 2003, Researchers were able to develop patterns for number issuance.

The research was supported by the National Science Foundation, the Army Research Office, Carnegie-Mellon University and the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center.

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Dominic Casey | July 22, 2009

## **In The News**

[Hazard Assessment of Copper Corrosion and Air-Conditioner Evaporator Coil Failures Possibly Associated with Drywall Imported from China.](#)

D&A Investigations, Inc. is currently in the process of relocating our office. Our new location is located east and on the same street. As Telephone/Fax Services are being transferred they will be down during this period, please use email [info@dgator.com](mailto:info@dgator.com) for contact during this time, we apologize for any inconvenience . . .!

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**Prior Publications:** The Media and Reporting 4.17.09 | And Things Are Not What They Seem 4.28.09 | Identity and Information 5.31.09 |