

**Oct. 12, 2007**

MSU Extended University is sending this letter to inform you of a security breach that involved an MSU Web server computer. An unknown machine or person remotely accessed the computer, which contained encrypted records of people who had registered on the web for MSU Extended University courses between October 2005 and September 2007. In some cases, a credit card number and/or social security number were in the files. Your personal information was in this database and may have been accessed.

The information in the Extended University database was encrypted, and we have no evidence that files containing personal information were sought or that personal data was stolen. However, we take this matter very seriously and the server and files were immediately pulled off-line following the discovery of the security breach. Computer servers at many prominent organizations have been breached in recent months, including several large universities and businesses. In nearly all cases, hackers were looking for temporary access to servers in order to send spam e-mails or serve as 'warehouses' for downloadable applications.

Again, there is no evidence that your personal data was stolen. However, our priority concern is your protection, and there are some steps you can take to protect yourself in the event that you were affected.

**Place a free fraud alert on your credit file.**

A fraud alert tells creditors to contact you before they open any new accounts or change your existing accounts and may protect you if someone tries to apply for credit in your name.

Call one of these three major credit bureaus (they share the fraud alert with each other). The alert is done through an automated phone system. You will have to supply your social security number. It takes only a few moments.

TransUnion Fraud Victim Assistance Department Phone: 800-680-7289 Fax: 714-447-6034 P.O. Box 6790 Fullerton, CA 92634-6790	Equifax Consumer Fraud Division Phone: 800-525-6285 or: 404- 885-8000 Fax: 770-375-2821 P.O. Box 740241 Atlanta, GA 30374-0241	Experian Experian's National Consumer Assistance Phone: 888-397-3742 P.O. Box 2104 Allen, TX 75013
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**Request a copy of your credit report to watch for suspicious activity.**

Every consumer is entitled to one free credit report every 12 months.

The easiest way is to go to [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) (this service is recommended by the Federal Trade Commission). You will be asked to provide your Social Security Number. Select from one (or all) of the three major credit reporting bureaus. The site may suggest that you purchase various reports for a fee. Look for the button that allows you to obtain the FREE CREDIT REPORT. Within a few moments, you will receive your full credit report, which you can print out or save to review later.

Look for inquiries from companies you haven't contacted, accounts you didn't open, and debts on your accounts that you can't explain. Check that information, like your Social Security number,

address(es), name or initials, and employers are correct. If you find fraudulent or inaccurate information, get it removed. See [Correcting Fraudulent Information in Credit Reports](http://www.ftc.gov/identitytheft) at [www.ftc.gov/identitytheft](http://www.ftc.gov/identitytheft) (under the Consumers button) to learn how.

You may see accounts that you don't recognize. That doesn't mean, necessarily, that the information is incorrect or fraudulent. For example, you may use a MasterCard issued by Exxon. Instead of seeing Exxon Mastercard on your report, you may see "Citi," the company that issues the card.

**Be alert for identity thieves who might capitalize on this incident.**

MSU will NOT call you to request further personal information about this. However, an identity thief may try to take advantage of this public situation and attempt to defraud you. Do not give out personal information regarding this incident, even if the caller purports to be from MSU. Likewise, private companies may try to contact you and offer to help you for a fee. Even if these are legitimate companies, please use caution when evaluating their information. Do not give out sensitive information over the phone!

**Continue reviewing your credit card statements and personal accounts for any suspicious activity.**

If you find suspicious activity or have reason to believe your information is being misused, immediately call your local law enforcement agency and file a police report.

We have taken steps to help insure that this type of incident does not occur again, including the removal of files containing personal information from the server. I regret this situation and any inconvenience or alarm it may cause you.

For questions about this incident and how to protect your personal data, visit <http://eu.montana.edu/security>.

If you have further questions, please call (406) 994-6550 during business hours (M-F, 8am-5pm) or e-mail [ExtendedU@montana.edu](mailto:ExtendedU@montana.edu)

Sincerely,  
Kim Obbink  
Director  
MSU Extended University

**Resources:**

Federal Trade Commission  
<http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft>

Montana Department of Justice  
<http://www.doj.mt.gov/consumer/>