



## Census Bureau accidentally exposes personal data

<http://www.fcw.com/article97859-03-08-07-Web>

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**Published on March 8, 2007** The Census Bureau accidentally posted personal information on 302 households on a public server several times since October 2006, officials said.

The personal information, including names, addresses, phone numbers, birthdates, family income ranges and other demographic data, was contained in a file that was placed on a public server for the purposes of testing new software applications. The file included about 250 fake accounts in addition to the real information. The bureau found out about the mistake when it found the file on the server in mid-February.

"We regret that the information was improperly posted and that our safeguards did not prevent this violation," said bureau Director Louis Kincannon, in a statement March 7.

The data was posted without a disclosure avoidance review, according to the statement.

Kincannon said he knows of no instances of misuse of the information, but the Commerce Department's Office of the Inspector General would investigate the matter. The agency will notify affected households and offer credit-monitoring assistance.

The Census Bureau has had many problems with misplacing personally identifiable information in the past. In September 2006, Commerce revealed it had lost 1,100 laptop computers between 2001 and 2006. Most of those misplaced computers belonged to the bureau. Of them, 246 laptops contained personally identifiable information.