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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STAPLES Business Depot Identifies Top At-Risk Behaviours for Security Threats

A few simple steps can significantly reduce identity theft, data loss and Web threats

Toronto, ON (February 13, 2008) – Cars without seat belts, lead paint, and bike riding without a helmet have become obsolete over the past few decades, thanks to education and behavioural changes. With each generation, new challenges arise, and information security tops the list of modern-day threats. Luckily, just as easy as taking a few seconds to put on a seat belt, changing paints or wearing a helmet, a few simple steps can increase a business and individuals' data and personal information security.

"Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in Canada. Couple that with the fact that 70 per cent of the Canadian public has had some piece of personal data stolen, we have an epidemic on our hands," said Frank W. Abagnale, world-renowned expert on identity theft and fraud, and subject of Steven Spielberg's movie "Catch Me if You Can." "What is amazing to me is how many of the incidents of identity theft and data loss from individuals and businesses can be avoided with simple common sense. When you look at the time and financial costs incurred by ignoring these safeguarding behaviours, it is staggering."

The first step in prevention is understanding that everyday behaviours have become the equivalent of driving without a seat belt on the data-theft highway. The risk for identity theft and data loss can easily occur when...

- **Personal information or financial documents are carelessly thrown away** – As recently as the 1990s, ripping junk mail, bank statements and credit cards, then throwing them in the trash ensured a safe trip to the dump. For business owners and individuals, having personal or financial data fall into the wrong hands can lead to thousands of dollars lost and days and weeks wasted

trying to repair a good name (whether a personal credit report or a businesses' community standing). In fact, each year, businesses pay about \$74 billion to handle identity theft and data loss crises. Shredders can help destroy documents containing vital information. Shredders can destroy documents with vital information in only a few seconds, and the selection of affordably priced shredders is abundant.

- **Opening e-mails from strangers or clicking on links to unfamiliar websites** – Viruses are a major problem in the virtual world. They can wipe out a hard drive or allow someone to take control of a computer and access private files. Also, phishing scams, where the e-mailer poses as someone from a financial institution to get account numbers and passcodes, is growing in prevalence. Anti-virus software like Norton Antivirus 2008 and the latest operating systems like Windows Vista Ultimate help protect the security of an individual computer or a company's computer system.

- **Computer files are rarely or have never been backed up** – Documents, financial information, photos and music, anything kept on a computer can be erased with a hard drive crash. With storage solutions such as an external hard drive from Seagate or a secure USB flash drive from Sandisk, it only takes a few moments to drag and drop important files to a new location. This behaviour is imperative for business owners who keep customer data and records on a computer. According to recent surveys, 70 per cent of business people have experienced data loss resulting in hours of loss and productivity and dollars spent trying to recover the data.

- **Guard your mail against theft** – Whether someone is an individual or business owner, mail should be picked up as soon as the mailman delivers – or a thief just might do it for you. A full mailbox is a target on private information. It takes only a few moments for a criminal to open a mailbox and take out the outgoing mail to access account numbers, routing numbers, signatures and any other information found in a mailbox. To avoid this scam, take your outgoing mail to a drop box, the nearest post office box or pay bills online.

- **Personal information is left lying around** – It just takes a moment to organize and move a document into a safe. No one should have access to important personal or business information, including friends, coworkers and

customers. A good safe will also protect an individual or businesses' information in case of a fire, flood or other natural disaster.

- **Forgetting to check credit history reports and scores** – Unfortunately, many people find out about identity theft after it is too late, and during times when they need good credit the most such as applying for a loan. Understanding and diligently watching credit scores for unauthorized activity is one of the first lines of defence against would-be ID thieves

“With data becoming much more vulnerable to savvy thieves, these easy and quick behaviours will drastically reduce risks to business and individuals alike,” said Abagnale. “Today, more than ever, security threats exist in the most unexpected places, creating opportunities for identities to be stolen, important information to be lost from hard drives, and computers to become susceptible to viruses and phishing scams.”

“We know identity theft has become a growing concern,” said Pete Gibel, vice president, merchandising, STAPLES Business Depot. “STAPLES Business Depot offers simple product solutions and services to help our customers protect themselves and reduce their chances of victimization.”

Although there are many considerations involved in decreasing personal and small business security threats, the time and money spent recovering from identity theft, data loss or computer crashes is even greater. Behaviours of the past, including the use of lead paint and riding a bike without a helmet, are now deemed unsafe and fortunately are no longer threats to adults or children. Likewise, investing in services and products that increase security will soon become common place and thieves will be stopped before they cause real harm.

About STAPLES Business Depot

Founded in Toronto in 1991, The Business Depot Ltd. is Canada's largest supplier of office supplies, business machines, office furniture and business services for the small business and home office customer. The company is an everyday low price retailer. The chain operates stores in all provinces across Canada under the banners STAPLES ® Business Depot™ and BUREAU EN GROS™. The company has over 13,500 employees serving customers through 300 office superstores, catalogue, and e-commerce. STAPLES ® Business Depot™/BUREAU EN GROS™ is committed to making

shopping easy by offering customers three ways to shop - online, by catalogue and in-store. More information is available at www.staples.ca.

About Staples

Staples, Inc. invented the office superstore concept in 1986 and today is the world's largest office products company. With 74,000 talented associates, the company is committed to making it easy to buy a wide range of office products, including supplies, technology, furniture, and business services. With 2006 sales of \$18.2 billion, Staples serves consumers and businesses ranging from home-based businesses to Fortune 500 companies in 22 countries throughout North and South America, Europe and Asia. Headquartered outside of Boston, Staples operates more than 2,000 office superstores and also serves its customers through mail order catalog, e-commerce and contract businesses. More information is available at www.staples.com.

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