



National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) Knowledge Corner:

Identity Theft Supplement



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History of the Identity Theft Supplement (ITS)



2004-2008:
Household identity
theft data captured
on NCVS

2008: ITS first
administered

2007: President's
Identity Theft Task
Force report with
recommendation

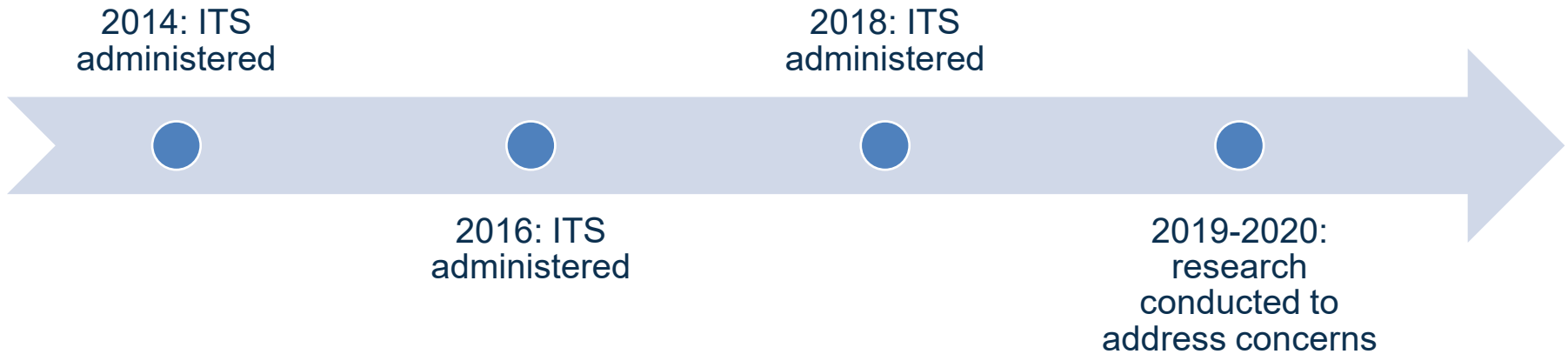
2012: Redesigned
ITS administered



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History of the ITS, cont.



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2021 Identity Theft Supplement

- Research resulted in changes to the ITS questionnaire:
 - Exclusion of attempted identity theft
 - Addition of dual reference period (lifetime and past year) for each type of identity theft
 - Ask for month and year of most recent occurrence of each type of past year identity theft
 - Addition of separate screener question for misuse of existing email and social media accounts
- Revised ITS administered July-December 2021



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ITS methodology



Eligible respondents

- Persons age 16 or older who complete an NCVS interview

Timing of data collection

- 6 months of data collection

Definition of identity theft

- The theft of personal information which typically occurs beyond the victim's consent, knowledge, and control which leads to the misuse of an existing account, opening of a new account, or other fraudulent purposes.

Types of identity theft captured

- Misuse of an existing bank account
- Misuse of an existing credit card account
- Misuse of an existing email/social media account
- Misuse of other type of existing account
- Misuse of personal information to open a new account
- Misuse of personal information for other fraudulent purposes



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ITS questionnaire structure



- Screener
 - Types of identity theft (lifetime and past year)
 - Date of most recent occurrence of each type of past year ID theft
- Details of the most recent incident
 - How/when the ID theft was discovered
 - Victim response-contacting law enforcement, credit bureaus, etc.
 - Victim impact— emotional and physical toll, impact on personal relationships
 - Offender information – identity, method used to access information
 - Financial Impact- direct loss, out-of-pocket loss, etc.
- Long Term Victimization and Consequences- problems with identity theft that occurred more than a year ago
- Preventative measures-shredding documents, checking credit reports, etc.
- Data breach-was SSN included in breach?



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Identity Theft Supplement (ITS)

Data Collection Status: Active

Frequency: Approximately every 2 years

Latest Data Available: 2021

Data Experts: Erika Harrell, PhD, BJS Statistician

Alexandra Thompson, BJS Statistician

Collection Period: 2008, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2021

Administered to persons age 16 or older who completed an in-person [National Crime Victimization Survey](#) (NCVS) interview, the Identity Theft Supplement (ITS) asks respondents if they had experienced identity theft during the past 12 months. The ITS encompasses several types of identity theft, such as the misuse of an existing account, misuse of personal information to open a new account, and other misuses of personal information. Persons who had reported experiencing at least one incident in the past 12 months were asked to describe characteristics of the most recent incident and its effects.

Methodology



Questionnaires



Publications and Products



Documentation



[Codebooks & Datasets](#)

ITS webpage:

<https://bjs.ojp.gov/data-collection/identity-theft-supplement-its>









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Infographics



Types of Identity Theft Measured by the NCVS Identity Theft Supplement

	Misuse of existing credit card account	Unauthorized access to a credit card account
	Misuse of existing bank account	Unauthorized access to a bank account
	Misuse of existing email/social media account	Unauthorized access to an email or social media account, e.g., Gmail or Facebook
	Misuse of other existing account	Unauthorized access to another type of existing account, e.g., a telephone, internet, utilities, or a medical insurance account
	Open a new account	Opening a new account using someone else's personal information
	Other misuse of personal information	Misuse of someone else's personal information to commit other fraudulent behavior, e.g., misidentifying to police or applying for a job

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, Identity Theft Supplement



Prevalence of Identity Theft in the United States

In 2021, 23.9 million persons (9% of all U.S. residents) reported that they had been a victim of identity theft.



Among identity theft victims –



7% reported to police or another law enforcement agency



59% had financial losses, totaling \$16.4 billion with an average direct loss of \$880



67% reported to a credit card company or bank



10% were severely distressed as a result of the crime

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Victims of Identity Theft, 2021 (NCJ 306474, October 2023)



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Questions?

- View other [Knowledge Corner videos](#) on YouTube
- See the [NCVS page on the BJS website](#) for more information on the NCVS
 - See the [NCVS, 2016: Technical Documentation](#) for more information about the methodology and instrumentation
- Email AskBJS@usdoj.gov with questions – emails are forwarded to BJS statisticians with topical expertise
- Access [NCVS public-use data files](#) at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
 - See the annual codebooks for more information



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