

MANAGING YOUR MONEY

Understanding the Security of Online Bill Payment

(NAPSA)—Online bill payment continues to grow at unprecedented rates as the advantages are resonating with today's busy consumers. A significant proportion of consumers (70 percent) who bank online, however, are still turning to their checkbook to handle bill paying.

What is it that's keeping people from embracing online bill payment? One reason consumers have cited is security. In a recent survey conducted by MasterCard Remote Payment and Presentment Service (RPPS), 50 percent of respondents identified concerns about the security of their personal financial information as the reason they aren't using online bill payment.

Online bill payment is secure, particularly if done through your financial institution. Here's why you can be confident your personal financial information is safe when you pay bills this way:

1. You have an established relationship with your financial institution. Otherwise you wouldn't trust them with your money. Online bill payment through your financial institution's Web site gives you the ability to pay ALL your bills and pay ANYONE in one place with one log in and password.

2. Your financial institution has security measures in place to protect you. Financial institutions employ a number of electronic safeguards to protect the privacy and confidentiality of your financial information. Most financial institutions provide their security policies on their online bill payment sites.

3. Less risk. Online bill payers are less likely to have their identities stolen than those paying the traditional way, according to Javelin Strategy & Research. Research has found that identity



thieves typically intercept personal financial information from bills and credit card statements thrown in the garbage or left in a mailbox.

4. Limited liability. Should someone access your account, many financial institutions will cover 100 percent of any losses incurred. Talk to your bank to learn more about their liability policy.

5. Online bill payers keep a closer eye on their accounts. Consumers who use online bill payment access their account information—to check balances, pay bills, confirm transactions—more frequently than those who use the traditional checkbook method. This means that online bill payers are more likely to notice unusual activity. With a majority of banks offering 24/7 customer service, fraudulent activity can be dealt with in a timely manner.

As consumers become more familiar with the safety and reliability of electronic transactions, they begin to enjoy what so many have already experienced: the flexibility, speed and convenience of paying bills online through their financial institution's Web site. Speak to someone at your financial institution to learn about the security measures in place. It's the first step toward complete online financial management.