

MANAGING YOUR MONEY



Making Your Bills Work For You

(NAPSA)—With the average household paying between 12 and 15 bills per month, families determined to get their monthly bills under control this year are finding free Web applications to help get a head start, implement and stick to a new financial plan.

Getting On Track

Here are some good habits that will help you get your finances (and your credit rating) in order:

1. Check your monthly statements to make sure all your transactions are ones you authorized.

2. Sign up for online bill pay whenever possible (most companies offer this service for free). Electronic payments can save you \$150 a year in postage and other costs, not to mention late fees and over-limit fees that can rapidly add up when you miss a payment.

3. Credit cards are a convenience as long as you pay your balance in full and avoid paying the minimum. But be sure to pay attention to your APRs, or the amount of interest charged for transactions and cash advances.

4. Check your credit report at least once a year. The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires Equifax, Experian and TransUnion to provide a free copy of your credit report, per your request, once every 12 months.

Online Assistance

In addition to these simple tips, consider taking advantage of new services available online that are designed to help you stay organized. Many are free and take just a few minutes to set up.

Billeo, for example, provides a free service that makes all online



Free Web applications can be a valuable resource for getting your finances in order.

transactions safe, secure and convenient. You can pay bills online directly at the Web sites of your service providers using any form of payment, whether it's credit card, debit card or online bank account. Payments are instantaneous, and the service automatically records your online transactions and saves a copy of your electronic receipts so you're always organized.

With Billeo, you can also compare your monthly bills with the average bill for the same service and track your spending habits with reports and graphs. It even keeps track of all your passwords and will alert you when bills are due, which means you have a better chance to organize your bills and pay them on time.

A Web application like this can save hundreds of hours a year and cut the tedium and work of online purchasing and bill paying—all while maximizing the benefits of credit card reward programs.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.billeo.com.