

News Release

19 May 2008

£5 billion Stolen Goods Now On Sale, Online

Over 1 million stolen items identified every year via CheckMEND

Research unveiled today by CheckMEND, (www.checkmend.com) the online stolen property checking service, has revealed that an estimated £5 billion worth of stolen goods are on sale over the internet at any time in the UK. Every minute, two items are identified as being stolen via CheckMEND.

The majority of UK Police forces use the CheckMEND data to check the legitimacy of property many thousands of times a week.

The problem is being exacerbated by “faceless” selling on the growing range of online auction and classified sites and the new phenomenon of “Market Places” on social networks like Facebook. Plus with the backdrop of the credit crunch impacting on family purses, UK consumers are increasingly on the lookout for a bargain or are clearing out their clutter to sell online or at the local car boot sale.

On average one in ten items of second hand goods checked through CheckMEND is being identified as being reported as stolen. Since its launch in 2006, CheckMEND has recently carried out 10 million checks on items valuing over £1 billion. The value of the goods identified as being stolen is around £100 million.

Adrian Portlock, Managing Director, CheckMEND, commented: “Ten million checks and counting is testament to CheckMEND having tapped into a consumer need from a global audience of second-hand shoppers and sellers. Although the second hand market has exploded via the internet, people are more wary of buying used goods and want to know an item’s history. CheckMEND empowers both the buyer and seller with the knowledge that the purchase that they are making is legal and that there is no risk involved. It is beginning to be understood that this system allows the Police to identify

stolen consumer goods quickly and easily and exposes buyers to possible confiscation of the property and prosecution.”

When a search is carried out through CheckMEND’s website the information is compared with the largest database of stolen goods and disabled mobile phones in the world, where over 30 million items of stolen property are listed. The most common items checked are mobile phones, closely followed by cameras, bikes, iPods, laptops, PCs, TVs and gaming consoles. The database also covers a range of other goods such as power tools and off-road vehicles. All are registered using their serial or other unique identifiable numbers making checking quick, easy and accurate.

CheckMEND’s services have been beneficial to established traders as well as individuals. Sam Millen Lost Prevention Manager at CeX who have over 40 shops in the UK buying and selling second-hand consumer electronics commented “So far the system has saved us considerably more than the cost of the service and we would recommend it to anyone buying, selling or exchanging second hand goods.”

CheckMEND is not only stopping the purchase of stolen goods but making the sale of legitimate second hand goods easier and more profitable. This is because each check comes with a CheckMEND history report which can be provided to the buyer by the seller, acting as independent validation.

Adrian Portlock explains, “We ran several trials selling identical items on a major auction site with and without a CheckMEND report. We received over 10% premium on the price of items sold with a CheckMEND history report proving the added-value of these reports to all sellers of second hand goods”

Uniquely, the information on CheckMEND is also used by police systems and if a stolen item is offered for sale, an alert can be triggered to the relevant police force. This has led to large numbers of items being recovered and the investigation of individuals trying to sell stolen goods. The CheckMEND service is deemed so powerful that many major Police forces recommend the service to local second hand retailers and Avon and Somerset Police has even subsidised its use within its local community for a trial period.

It is not widely recognized that identifiable property is often stolen as a supplementary act to more serious crimes, and if that item is subsequently identified it can open a whole range of investigative avenues.

For more information please visit www.checkmend.com

- ends -

Notes for editors

CheckMEND is a commercial service provided by Recipero Limited a specialist aggregator of information on possession ownership and associated criminality. Based in Gloucestershire, Recipero provides services to a range of blue chip clients and government organizations.

The data on the CheckMEND database is provided and updated daily by law enforcement, the mobile phone industry, the public, insurance companies, government organisations and retailers from over 40 countries worldwide.

Fast Facts

- An estimated £5 billion worth of stolen goods are 'for sale' in the UK at any one time
- There are over £1 billion worth of insurance claims made in the UK every year from items being stolen
- There are over 30 million items of stolen property listed on CheckMEND from the UK with an estimated value of £3 billion
- 10% of all items of second hand goods checked through CheckMEND is identified as having been reported stolen
- Over 10 million checks have been made through CheckMEND over the last 18 months
- Over 600,000 checks are now made through CheckMEND every month
- The total value of items checked over the last 18 months is over £1 billion
- The value of the stolen goods identified as stolen is over £100 million