



Historical Records Theft: Strategies for Prevention and Response

Getting the Word Out

While communicating information about a theft to traditional print, television, and radio outlets is essential, a number of online tools are available that allow you to share information about a theft from your repository. When developing your communication strategy consider taking advantage of the flexibility, speed, and diversity of these online resources.

Web Resources

There are a dedicated set of websites, publications and databases that highlight and disseminate information about stolen items. They generally provide written descriptions and images of the items and contact information for the repositories. (Accessed September 9, 2015.)

- [Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America Security Blog](#)
- [Antique Tribal Art Dealers Association, Inc. Theft Alert](#)
- [Art Loss Register](#)
- [Association of College and Research Libraries Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Security Committee, Theft Reports Update Blog](#)
- [Auction Central News](#)
- [FBI National Stolen Art File \(NSAF\)](#)
- [Hauls of Shame](#)
- [International League of Antiquarian Booksellers](#)
- [Interpol Stolen Works of Art Database](#)
- ["Links Relating to the Theft of Early Books and Maps"](#)

Your Website

Your website is a good place to post information about theft and missing items. In addition to increasing chances of recovery sharing information about a theft on your website will serve as a demonstration of your organization's commitment to security and the prevention of historical records theft.

Social Media

Online social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google + reach broad and diverse audiences. Posting information about stolen records to social media opens the possibility of reaching people you may not initially consider when developing your communication plan.

Blogs

Blogs can be an excellent resource for sharing information about your theft and missing items. You might use your own blog or post information on a blog hosted by another organization such as the [Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America Security Blog](#).

Forums and Discussion Boards

Internet forums and discussion boards can be invaluable for reporting theft of records. Forum and discussion board postings allow you to tap into an audience with specialized knowledge of a given field and provide access to an established network of users. Forum users can not only help disseminate information about stolen materials but may be able to help identify thieves. Forums may be especially useful if the stolen items are valuable to a well defined group of collectors or specialists.

Listservs

Thefts reported on relevant listservs with cross-postings distributed to other listservs and forwarded messages sent to other contacts are an extremely effective means of publicizing thefts.

- [Archives & Archivists Listserv](#)
- [Records Management Listserv](#)
- [Conservation Distlist](#)

Newsletters

Many historical records repositories use an electronic or print newsletter to share important information with users and friends. These newsletters are an important link between your organization and the public, and serve as an existing, simple forum for theft information. Consider creating a regular column detailing security procedures, security bulletins or updates, articles highlighting items that have been stolen or recovered, and share information about your theft. Including this information in your newsletter requires little additional planning and will quickly reach the people who are most connected to your organization.