



# POSTAL NEWS

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## **AMERICANS SAY U.S. POSTAL SERVICE** **MOST TRUSTED AGENCY**

### ***Ponemon Institute study asks public to rate 57 federal departments***

Washington, D.C. – For the second year in a row, Americans have rated the U.S. Postal Service as the number one agency they trust to protect their privacy. Not only did the Postal Service retain the top spot, customer satisfaction and trust scores increased from the previous year, a national study shows.

Ponemon Institute LLC published its “2006 Privacy Trust Study of the United States Government” this week. The study sought to understand the level of confidence Americans have in the many government agencies that routinely collect and use the public’s personal information.

The Postal Service retained the top spot with a privacy trust score of 82 percent. It also is one of the few federal agencies able to increase its customer satisfaction and trust scores. While scores declined an average of 5 percent, the rating for the Postal Service increased by 4 percentage points, the study shows. The overall average trust score was 47 percent.

“No government agency touches the public in the way the United States Postal Service does. No other government agency has the one-to-one, personalized service with its customers, six days a week, 52 weeks a year,” said Delores Killete, Vice President and Consumer Advocate. “Americans trust the Postal Service to be discreet in handling their mail and to safeguard their personal information.”

The Federal Trade Commission received the second highest score at 78 percent, followed by the IRS at 74 percent.

“At a time in our nation’s history when we are using the words ‘identity theft,’ this report reinforces the vital, trusted role the Postal Service plays in our daily lives,” Killete said.

Dr. Larry Ponemon, Chairman and Founder of Ponemon Institute, said one of the most important questions asked of the more than 6,000 respondents focused on whether the public believed the privacy commitments of the federal government.

“We wanted to understand if people thought that these various agencies were actively protecting their privacy and controlling access to the information that was being provided,” Ponemon said. “We were very deliberate in what we asked and how we presented the information.”

The Privacy Trust Study identified 10 factors to determine individual agency scores. The factors ranged from a sense of security when providing personal information and human contact to secure web sites and access to personal information. Other findings include:

- 69 percent cited “loss of civil liberties and privacy rights” as their number one concern, up 5 percent from 2004.
- 63 percent said “surveillance into personal life” as ranking unchanged as second concern in the 2004 survey.
- 47 percent said the “monitoring of e-mail and Web activities” was third most important.
- “Theft of your identity” was cited by 23 percent, up from 19 percent in the 2004 study.
- The Postal Service scored eight points higher than the IRS and 10 points higher than the Census Bureau, the only other federal agencies in contact with every American.

“The top three factors for creating trust, according to our study, are a sense of security when providing personal information, limited collection of personal information and one-to-one personal contact,” Ponemon said. “Respondents seem to agree that in their daily lives, the Postal Service delivers on all three and accordingly continues to earn and keep their trust and confidence.”

***Please note:***

- ***Broadcast quality sound is available on this topic at [www.usps.com/news](http://www.usps.com/news)***
- ***Delores Killete, Vice President, Consumer Advocate and Dr. Larry Ponemon are available for interviews today. Please call 202.268.3118 or 301.325.1960.***

Since 1775, **the Postal Service** and its predecessor, the Post Office Department, has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits more than 144 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider delivering to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$70 billion, it is the world’s leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world’s mail volume—some 212 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

**Ponemon Institute, LLC** is dedicated to independent research and education that advances responsible information and privacy management practices within business and government. Our mission is to conduct high quality, empirical studies on critical issues affecting the management and security of sensitive information about people and organizations. As a member of the council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO), we uphold strict data confidentiality, privacy and ethical research standards. We do not collect any personally identifiable information from individuals (or company identifiable information in our business research). Furthermore, we have strict quality standards to ensure that subjects are not asked extraneous, irrelevant or improper questions.