



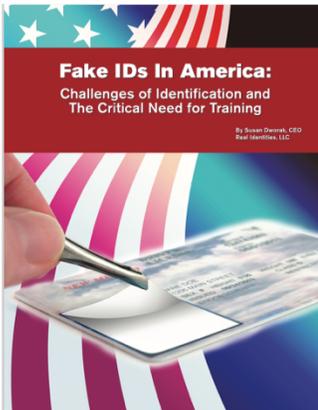
September 2018 Newsletter

New Report on Fake IDs Makes a Case for Better Training

By Lise Gervais

A recent report, *“Fake IDs in America: Challenges of Identification and the Critical Need for Training”* reminds us that the issues around fake ID go beyond the problem of kids getting into clubs. The author, Susan Dworak, discusses the kind of issues that are created when fake ID is used.

While some may see it as a rite of passage, or think “what’s the harm of a college kid buying a six-pack from time to time?”, the implications and economic costs of fake ID go beyond that, to what Susan Dworak refers to as, “the legal, financial and social consequences resulting from underage drinking”.



The use of a fake ID can affect the person using it, the person checking it, the licensee, and possibly other patrons. As Susan Dworak puts it in this report: “Just one use of one fake ID can result in life-altering consequences for many people.” The Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s factsheet

on underage drinking states that 11% of alcohol is consumed by 12- to 20-year olds. Though it’s not known how much of this alcohol is acquired using fake ID, it stands to reason that less alcohol would be consumed--and possibly fewer of the negative consequences of underage drinking would occur-- if there were fewer fake IDs around.

Fake ID can be identification that is borrowed or stolen from someone else, altered to represent another identity, or fabricated entirely. There are numerous websites touting the fun to be had going to bars and clubs and getting drunk with a fake ID. For about \$100, a counterfeit driver’s license from one of many US states can be obtained using untraceable bitcoin. (One site even offered a volume discount: 20% off for 3 or more IDs, 30% off for 15 or more.) Internet service providers may be allowing

websites they host to break their user agreements by providing this illegal service.

One blogger placed an order on one of these websites using a cartoon character for the photo. The ID arrived hidden inside of an appliance manual. He showed the ID to a number of bouncers to get their opinion, and despite the website’s claim that it could fool anyone, the bouncers unanimously found aspects of it (besides the photo of the cartoon character) that tipped them off that it was fake.

“At any given time, each jurisdiction has a number of valid versions of ID in circulation, resulting in hundreds of currently valid versions of IDs in the US. Complicating matters for those who check ID, new versions are added and current versions are updated periodically.”

Susan Dworak, *“Fake IDs in America: Challenges of Identification and the Critical Need for Training”*

The ubiquity of driving has made state-issued drivers’ licenses (or DMV-issued ID cards) the standard for identification. Because they are issued on the state level, there are at least 54 valid licenses at any given time (states plus DC and territories). Depending on the state, renewal is required every 4, 5 or 8 years, and as states try to make licenses counterfeit-proof, features are added or changed. The result is that there are many different licenses in circulation at any given moment. This illustrates the importance of frequent and thorough training for anyone who checks identification.

The Real ID Act of 2005 set standards for states regarding the appearance, information that needs to appear on the card, and what kind of documentation is needed to obtain a state-issued ID. Anyone who has renewed a license in the last few years may have noticed the extra steps it can take now. (I had to get a notarized letter to obtain a copy of my birth

certificate from another state so that I could renew my license.) There is always a balance between convenience and security. While this report focuses on fake ID used to acquire alcohol, Ms. Dworak makes the point that the Las Vegas shooter and the 9/11 attackers also used fake ID.

In recent years, using false identification has become more consequential. In the past the ID might have been confiscated and the minor might have been banished from the establishment, but these days fines and even jail time can result. In California, if a minor is caught using fake ID, punishment might be fines and community service as well as the loss of a driver's license--which can be a serious consequence when there is little public transit to get to school, work, sports and social activities.

The report calls for higher penalties for creating, selling and using false identification. Ms. Dworak also recommends beefing up what sounds like pretty anemic minimum training for "gatekeepers", the people who are responsible for checking identification. The report also calls for shifting some of the responsibility for robust training into the hands of the licensees. This could result in gatekeepers who are better able to detect fake ID, decreasing the risk that the license could be put in jeopardy.

Changing regulations around alcohol delivery and ID checking might help keep alcohol out of the hands of kids, too. Because third-party delivery services are often not licensees, they don't have the same risk if they don't verify the identity of the deliverer--and in some cases may not even know that there is alcohol in the package.

Although scanners and apps can be used to verify an ID quickly, they are not always as effective as a visual and tactile inspection. Fakes are sometimes a different thickness, have elements out of place, are slightly the wrong color or have obviously been tampered with. States are trying different methods for making licenses difficult to counterfeit, like raised lettering, microprinted designs that can only be seen under a magnifying glass or elements that can be seen under UV light. But all of this visual and tactile checking takes time and training, and scanners promise to make things go faster. Sometimes though, technology is not able to determine that an ID is fake. Another knock on scanners is that they gather information on the ID holder; and, through

unsecure data transmission or storage, this could lead to identity theft.

This report gives recommendations to make the ID checking process more effective. An over-reliance on technologies may not be able to keep up with counterfeiters and states' attempts to thwart them. Visual and tactile elements, combined with in-depth and continuous training, may be more effective at finding fake IDs than scanners or apps.

But there has to be will, too. If the bottom line of selling more drinks is incentivized and public safety is a second thought, the likelihood of fake IDs going undetected increases. As Ms. Dworak put it in this report, "A societal shift is needed to stop the tacit acceptance of underage drinking and fake IDs. Successful societal shifts make policy stick."

Sources:

"FAKE IDs IN AMERICA: CHALLENGES OF IDENTIFICATION AND THE CRITICAL NEED FOR TRAINING," By Susan Dworak, CEO Real Identities, LLC
<https://www.centerforalcoholpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/FAKE-IDS-IN-AMERICA-2018.pdf>.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Fact Sheet – Underage Drinking
<https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm>

Susan Dworak will participate in a panel on the Fake ID topic at the 11th annual Center for Alcohol Policy Conference in St. Paul on October 10. Pam Erickson will participate on a panel on alcohol tourism. Please consider attending this conference to learn more.
<https://www.centerforalcoholpolicy.org/law/>