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FAKE IDS AND THEIR AVAILABILITY ON THE INTERNET

Youngsters these days are so hot-blooded that they don't mind breaking the laws just to get what they want. Since when has the legal age of 21 years for drinking meant anything to the youth? Get a fake ID made online or buy a do-it-yourself kit and voila, flash the fake ID and drink away to glory at any pub or disc. What with technology getting better each passing day, the Fake IDs are getting more and more real to the extent that even law enforcement agents find it hard to tell them apart.

Fake ID manufacturers received a huge boost in their illegal sales after a federal enactment that increased the legal drinking age from 18 to 21 years. After the advent of computers and the internet, there is no stopping the customers or the Fake ID makers as access has become easier than ever. College kids with a little extra money don't mind paying a few dollars for an ID that looks so real, they'll probably never be identified even by police officers. Fake ID makers these days use cutting-edge software and consequently, can replicate even the most elaborate of IDs. Professionals rarely use the traditional cut and paste method where you replace the photo of a genuine scanned ID with that of the customer and make other requisite changes. This method does not produce very convincing IDs but is sufficient to fool bartenders especially if the pub is a dark dingy place with kids head-banging to loud music.

So how does one go about procuring a fake ID? You can either buy a do-it-yourself kit online that will usually include templates, a laminating machine and a printer or just order for a fake ID online. You can even place an order with a 1-day rush! Fake IDs cost anywhere from \$10 to \$150 when ordered online depending on how authentic you would want them to look. The more expensive ones use sophisticated machinery and are extremely hard to be detected. Cheaper ones are usually made by scanning original IDs, making the necessary changes to it and printing it out. What with so many common softwares providing features to edit text and insert images, it's an easy settlement for both the fake ID makers and for those buying it.

The figures for the number of fake IDs in the country are estimated at close 2 million. Considering there are about twice as many school and college going kids, it's a plausible estimate. Some states have IDs that are simpler to copy than other states. New Jersey ranks number one when it comes to easy replication followed by Colorado, Vermont and Georgia. Efforts are being made to make the IDs more intricate to discourage ruthless copying, but no matter how many details are added, the fake ID makers will also find or create a software to do the same. It's a million dollar industry and they aren't going to stop just because it got a little bit more difficult.

The latest government initiative is the move to implement scanners connected to government databases. You can see the loophole in this plan already. First of all the scanner costs \$45 and secondly, the process of checking the details can be cumbersome putting even the genuine ID holders into a lot of problem. Well, what the hell, the kids will just find a bar that doesn't use the scanner.

The Internet False ID Prevention Act of 2000 hands down a prison sentence of 20 years for those who are caught distributing DIY kits that are capable of duplicating 5 or more IDs. In its drive to fight the websites providing these services, the law enforcement agencies were able to bring down the number of such sites to 2,000. A lot of these businesses are based outside of the United States and so are hard to close down.