

By Alain Strowel, 18 October 2010

The increasing role of intangibles evidenced by ... theft numbers!



Purse thefts today! Today only? And what does the purse of companies contain nowadays?

For the first time, reported thefts of information and electronic data have surpassed physical property losses as the biggest crime problem, according to the Kroll annual global fraud survey (as reported by the Financial Times, 18 Oct. 2010). “This is a reflection of the changing nature of the economy”, said Richard Plansky head of the risk consultancy’s New York office . He adds: “More and more of the value of a company is intangible rather than things. Firms don’t make widgets. They make ideas”. Reported thefts of ideas as a proxy for assessing the role of intangibles: thieves can thus be helpful for metrics at least!

What could be expected from those theft numbers? According to the FT, another recent survey (prepared by PwC) “found that more than half of companies expected to increase spending on defence of intellectual property”. Not such a good news for the economy, but probably a good news for some IP professionals...