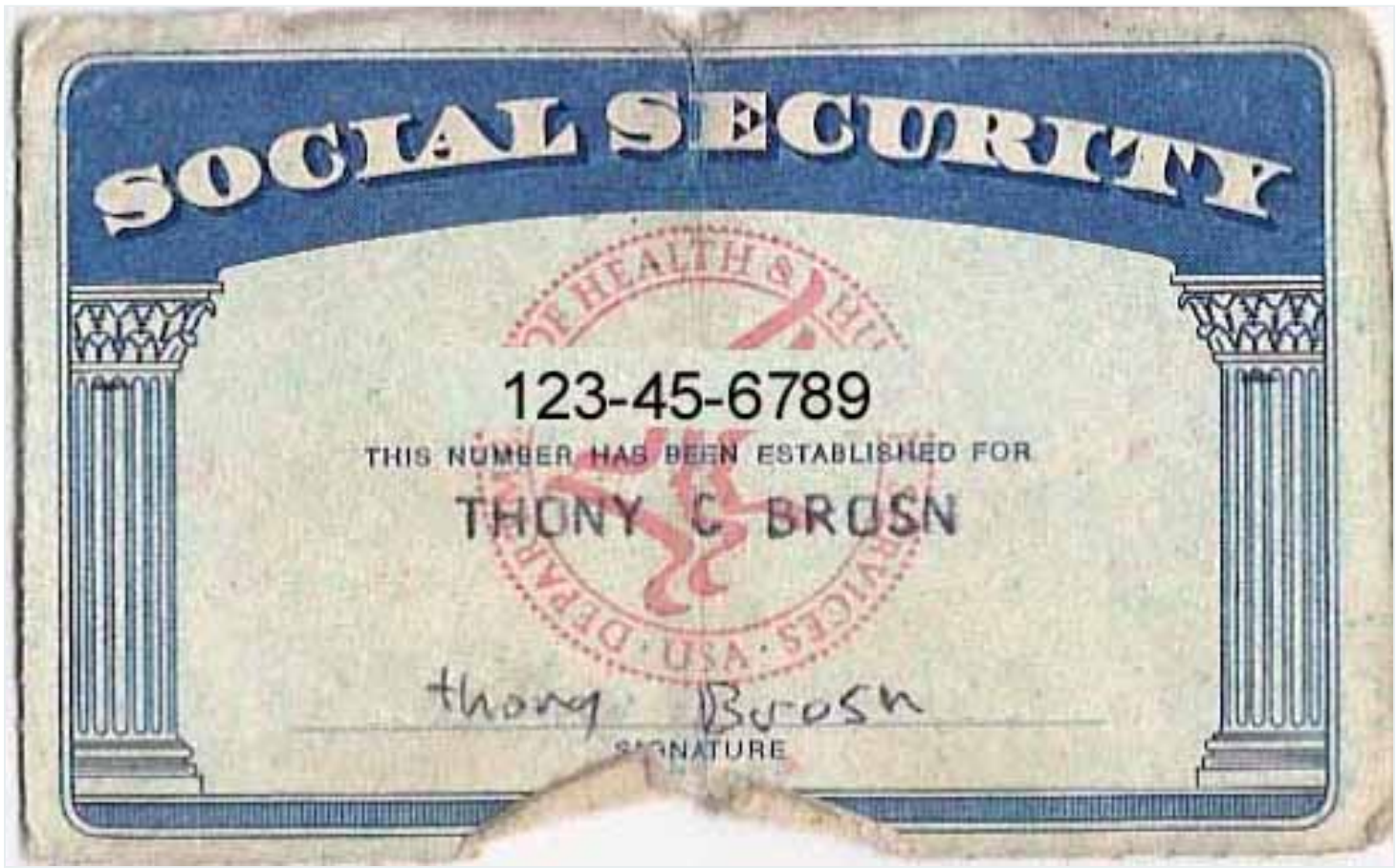


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James Paille • Mar. 31, 2016



This article first appeared on the [Thomson Reuters Blog](#).

Ever wonder how Social Security numbers are generated? And how do you tell if a Social Security number is valid?

Prior to June of 2011, Social Security numbers were generated geographically. The first three numbers indicated where the person lived when getting the number.

SSN Area Number Location		SSN Area Number Location	
001-003	New Hampshire	478-485	Iowa

004-007

Maine

486-500

Missouri

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135-158

New Jersey

518-519

Idaho

159-211

Pennsylvania

520

Wyoming

212-220

Maryland

521-524

Colorado

221-222

Delaware

525, 585

New Mexico

223-231

Virginia

526-527

Arizona

232

North Carolina

528-529

Utah

232-236

West Virginia

530, 680

Nevada

237-246

Not Issued

531-539

Washington

247-251

South Carolina

540-544

Oregon

252-260

Georgia

545-573

California

261-267

Florida

574

Alaska

268-302

Ohio

575-576

Hawaii

303-317

Indiana

577-579

District of  
Columbia

318-361

Illinois

580

U.S. Virgin Islands

362-386

Michigan

580-584

Puerto Rico

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433-439	Louisiana	691-699	Not Issued
440-448	Oklahoma	700-728	Railroad Board
449-467	Texas	729-733	Enumeration at Entry
468-477	Minnesota	750-772	Not Issued

After June of 2011, the Social Security Administration instituted a randomizer process. This process did three things:

1. It eliminated the geographical significance of the first three digits of the SSN (referred to as the area number), by no longer allocating the area numbers for assignment to individuals in specific states.
2. It eliminated the significance of the highest group number and, as a result, the High Group List is frozen in time and can only be used to see the area and group numbers the Social Security Administration issued prior to the randomization implementation date.
3. Previously unassigned area numbers were introduced for assignment excluding area numbers 000, 666 and 900-999.

Additionally, the Social Security Administration has instituted a [website](#) and a [free service](#) that allows employers, organizations or third-party submitters to verify Social Security numbers for wage reporting purposes. Names and numbers are matched, thus ensuring W-2 name-number matching. Employers are encouraged to use this service to verify numbers and name matches.

I am often asked which numbers are not valid. Any Social Security number starting

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you know where they were born!

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*James Paille CPP, CPP has been an executive manager in the payroll service industry for more than 30 years, specializing in managing multi-location offices. He is currently director of Operations, [MyPay Solutions](#), Thomson Reuters. Jim is a member of the APA's Board of Directors and National Speakers Bureau, and chairs the CPP Certification Review Panel. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from St. John Fisher College in Rochester, NY.*

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