Average credit statistics

As a company that helps the nation's largest banks and financial institutions assess credit risk, Fair Isaac is often asked to describe the credit use of a typical consumer. In researching the answer, we discovered that consumers vary immensely in what types of credit they use and how they use it.

By analyzing a representative national sample of millions of consumer credit profiles, Fair Isaac was able to survey the panorama of credit activity across the U.S. The following statistics reflect the average use of credit by today's consumers.

**Number of Credit Obligations**

On average, today's consumer has a total of 13 credit obligations on record at a credit bureau. These include credit cards (such as department store charge cards, gas cards, or bank cards) and installment loans (auto loans, mortgage loans, student loans, etc.). Not included are savings and checking accounts (typically not reported to a credit bureau). Of these 13 credit obligations, 9 are likely to be credit cards and 4 are likely to be installment loans.

**Past Payment Performance**

On average, today's consumers are paying their bills on time. Less than half of all consumers have ever been reported as 30 or more days late on a payment. Only 3 out of 10 have ever been 60 or more days overdue on any credit obligation. 77% of all consumers have never had a loan or account that was 90+ days overdue, and less than 20% have ever had a loan or account closed by the lender due to default.

**Credit Utilization**

About 40% of credit card holders carry a balance of less than $1,000. About 15% are far less conservative in their use of credit cards and have total card balances in excess of $10,000. When we look at the total of all credit obligations combined (except mortgage loans), 48% of consumers carry less than $5,000 of debt. This includes all credit cards, lines of credit, and loans-everything but mortgages. Nearly 37% carry more than $10,000 of non-mortgage-related debt as reported to the credit bureaus.

**Total Available Credit**

The typical consumer has access to approximately $19,000 on all credit cards combined. More than half of all people with credit cards are using less than 30% of their total credit card limit. Just over 1 in 7 are using 80% or more of their credit card limit.

**Length of Credit History**

The average consumer's oldest obligation is 14 years old, indicating that he or she has been managing credit for some time. In fact, we found that 1 out of 4 consumers had credit histories of 20 years or longer. Only 1 in 20 consumers had credit histories shorter than 2 years.

**Credit Inquiries**

When someone applies for a loan or a new credit card account - in short, any time one applies for credit and a lender requests a copy of the credit report - this request is noted as an “inquiry” in the applicant's credit file. The average consumer has had only one inquiry on his or her accounts within the past year. Fewer than 6% had four or more inquiries resulting from a search for new credit.