



# Protection of Registrars

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Beau Brendler, Director, Consumer Reports WebWatch

[brenbe@consumer.org](mailto:brenbe@consumer.org) / 914.378.2018

## Brief Introduction: WebWatch

- Project of Consumers Union of the U.S., part of Consumer Reports family -- magazine, newsletters, Web sites.
- Investigate, inform, improve: report/rate; solve problems for individual consumers; inform public; advocate with government and agencies.
- Mechanisms: Guidelines and compliance list; industry-specific guidelines; “wisdom of commons” reporting (StopBadware.org).
- <http://www.consumerwebwatch.org>
- <http://blog.consumerwebwatch.org/theunsponsoredlink/>
- <http://www.stopbadware.org> venture with Harvard Law School and Oxford Internet Institute.

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

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### Research Reports

#### Health

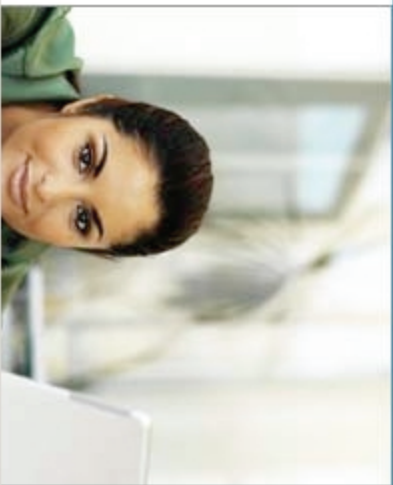
HealthRatings.org: Consumer Health WebWatch Rates 20 Health Information Sites...[view](#) 

#### Search Engines

Sill in Search of Disclosure: Re-evaluating How Search Engines Explain the Presence of Advertising in Search Results...[view](#) 

#### Web Credibility

A Matter of Trust: What Users Went From Web Sites: A Report on Consumer Concerns



### Guidelines Compliant Site

#### Shop Natural

ShopNatural.com -- This Tucson, Arizona-based food co-op has an online inventory of more than 6,000 natural and organic products and publishes a monthly newsletter with news, nutrition and health tips. The company is one of more than 175 Web sites that have pledged to abide by Consumer Reports WebWatch's five guidelines for improving Web credibility...[view](#) 

[Take the Pledge!](#) 

## Success in Marketplace Change

- **HEALTH:** Ratings of top 20 health information sites in 2005, 2007 and ratings of diet sites in 2006 produce dialogue, changes (40% among info, 50% diet sites).
- **MEDIA:** Major U.S. media publicize guidelines; many organizations “take the pledge” themselves (CNN, NY Times, CNET, Washington Post, St. Pete Times, major pub. b/cast).
- **TRAVEL:** Meetings with major sites results in guidelines compliance, transparency of vendors, consumer warnings.
- **SEARCH:** Focus on transparency of sponsored links; Google incorporates StopBadware data in search.

## Defining 'Consumer' In ICANN Context

- **Skepticism:** 30 percent of U.S. consumers altering Web behavior due to concerns about fraud, predators, rip-offs. (WebWatch nationally representative poll Oct. 2005).
- **Unaware:** Of 795,000 households, 20 percent no antivirus software; 35 percent don't block or remove spyware. 2.4 million U.S. households with broadband not using firewall (CU state of the Net survey 2006).
- **Stung:** 1 in 2 experienced high levels of spam, 25% major, costly problem due to virus, \$5.2 b spent. (State of Net 2006).

## Consumer Awareness of Registrar Issues

- MOMCONs vs. WIREDCONs
- MOMCONs frustration with spam and phishing high (argument for transparency and disclosure of data, against proxy).
- WIREDCONs “rightfully” seek privacy and protection, awareness low of risk of loss of name.
- Overarching MOMCON issue: curb fraud, spam, phishing

## Suggestions

- Verify and improve quality of WHOIS data (responsibility?)
- Escrow services list themselves as domain-name “owner”? Best of both worlds if those services had to make records accountable to LEAs?
- Tailor requirements by domain (i.e., stricter standards for .org, .gov, .edu, less so for .tv, .ru, etc.) Subsequent consumer awareness project required.

## Registrar Accreditation Agreement

- Joint responsibility (1): MOMCONs say, system of accountability and compliance for wayward registrars is good.
- Reseller relationships (2): MOMCONs say, that which increases registrar and reseller accountability/compliance is good.
- Resale of Registrars (3): MOMCONs say, meeting minimum requirements and promoting stability is good.
- Skills Testing (4): Compulsory training, and having registrars/resellers/those doing business with consumers who know what they are doing, is very good.
- Escrow contact information (5): “Show Your Hand” on the public Web. When it comes to business transactions, consumers need to know (and need to be taught how to determine) who they are doing business with. Example: CourtRecords.org
- Enforcement tools (6): That which assists in compliance is good.