FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Public Workshop on Consumer Privacy on the Global Information Infrastructure

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AGENCY: Federal Trade Commission

ACTION: Announcement of Public Workshop

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Consumer Protection of the Federal Trade Commission announces it will host a one and one-half day public workshop on consumer privacy on the Global Information Infrastructure (GII). Online transactions, such as the purchase of goods, generate electronic data that is easily duplicated, stored, retrieved, analyzed and re-used. Advances in hardware, software, and communications technologies additionally allow previously impossible or impractical manipulation of information. The Bureau's purposes for conducting this workshop are to gather information on consumers' and industry's understanding of the privacy issues posed by the emerging online marketplace, and also to gather information on online protections for consumer privacy.

DATES: The workshop will be held on June 4, 1996 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (Room 432) and on June 5, 1996 from 9:00 am to 12:30pm (Room 332), at the Federal Trade Commission, Sixth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580. All interested parties are welcome to attend.

ADDRESSES: Requests to participate in the workshop should be mailed, on or before May 24, 1996, to Martha Landesberg, Division of Credit Practices, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, DC 20580. Written comments should be directed to: Secretary, Federal Trade Commission, Room H-159, Sixth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20580. Comments should be identified as "Consumer Privacy -- Comment."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Martha Landesberg, Division of Credit Practices, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, Washington DC 20850. Telephone: (202) 326-2825; electronic mail address: mlandesberg@ftc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Public Workshop on Consumer Privacy on the Global Information Infrastructure

AGENDA

June 4, 1996

Session 1: *The Use of Consumer Information*

Issues

How is personal information currently used by online businesses? What do consumers know about the use of consumer information in online marketing and commercial transactions? What kinds of disclosure and notice might be provided to consumers? What choices can or should consumers have in exercising control over uses of personal information? How can the security and accuracy of personal information used online be assured? Are voluntary standards useful in this area?

Session 2: *Electronic Regimes for Protecting Consumer Privacy Online*

Issues

Can technological standards such as the Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) system be used as models to facilitate automatic disclosure of privacy policies and the availability of consumer choice regarding the use of personal information?

Session 3: *Consumer and Business Education in Online Privacy Issues*

Issues

What are the various means of educating consumers and industry about the use of personal information in online transactions?

Session 4: *The Use of Medical and Financial Information Online*

Issues

What kinds of heightened protections might be afforded medical and financial information? What role, if any should such information play in online transactions?

Session 5: *The Impact of the European Commission's Council Directive on the Protection of Personal Data*

Issues

What does the Directive require of government and industry with respect to the free flow of personal information? Can industry satisfy the Directive's "adequacy" requirement through the use of interactive privacy regimes?

June 5, 1996

Session 6: *The Collection and Use of Information about Children*

Issues

What information is currently collected about children online and how is it being used? Is it appropriate to place limits on the online collection and/or use of information from and about children? What limits could be recommended? Who may consent and exercise choice in this context?