



Press Release

TRUSTe Report Reveals Consumer Awareness and Attitudes about Behavioral Targeting

Consumers indicate a high level of awareness that tracking and targeting occur

SAN FRANCISCO—March 26, 2008—Consumer privacy organization TRUSTe announced today the results of a study conducted by global market insight and information group TNS regarding American Internet users' knowledge, attitudes and concerns about behavioral targeting and its implications on their online privacy. Overall results indicate a high level of awareness that internet activities are being tracked for purposes of targeting advertising, and a high level of concern associated with that tracking, even when it isn't associated with personally identifiable information.

Behavioral targeting has become a hot button issue recently, as industry enthusiasm for delivering customized experiences and improved marketing metrics runs up against consumer privacy concerns and calls for greater transparency around emerging tracking and targeting techniques. Based on the results of the survey, lack of transparency may factor into privacy concerns. 71 percent of online consumers are aware that their browsing information may be collected by a third party for advertising purposes, but only 40 percent are familiar with the term "behavioral targeting." 57 percent of respondents say they are not comfortable with advertisers using that browsing history to serve relevant ads, even when that information cannot be tied to their names or any other personal information.

An overwhelming majority (91 percent) of respondents expressed willingness to take necessary steps to assure increased privacy online when presented with the tools to control their internet tracking and advertising experience, suggesting a need for added education, transparency and choices for behavioral targeting. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) would choose to see online ads only from online stores and brands that they know and trust and 44 percent of respondents would click buttons or icons to make that happen.

To the contrary, a similar proportion of consumers (42 percent) say they would sign up for an online registry to ensure that advertisers are not able to track browsing behaviors, even if it meant that they would receive more ads that are less relevant to their interests. This division poses a serious dilemma for BT practitioners and industry privacy advocates, because consumers say they want more relevant advertising, but don't want to be tracked in order to get it.

"Education once again appears to be the key to finding a constructive balance between behavioral targeting and consumer privacy, because no matter how much we assure anonymity, there is still significant discomfort with the idea of tracking," said Fran Maier, executive director of TRUSTe. "We have a solid indication that consumers want us to find a way to get them the advertising that is relevant to them. In order to do this, behavioral targeting is one of the most promising methods, but at the very least, it has to be made more transparent, provide choices, and deliver real value.

For the TRUSTe behavioral tracking study, TNS conducted an online survey among a randomly selected sample of American adults whose households belong to TNS's online consumer panel. In total, 1,015 interviews were completed between February 1 and 5, 2008. The data were weighted by region, market size, age, gender and household size, composition and income, to reflect the demographic composition of the online adult population in the continental U.S.

The full research results are available to TRUSTe sealholders at no charge. Media can obtain a complete copy of the study by contacting Morgan McDowell of blast! PR.



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About TRUSTe:

TRUSTe helps consumers and businesses identify trustworthy online organizations through its Web Privacy Seal, Email Privacy Seal and Trusted Download Programs. Having celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2007, TRUSTe certifies more than 2,400 Web sites, including the major internet portals and leading brands such as AOL, eBay, IBM, Intuit, Microsoft and Oracle. TRUSTe resolves thousands of individual privacy disputes every year. To learn more about internet privacy visit www.truste.org.

About TNS:

TNS is a global market information and insight group. Its strategic goal is to be recognized as the global leader in delivering value-added information and insights that help its clients make more effective business decisions. TNS delivers innovative thinking and excellent service across a network of 80 countries. Working in partnership with clients, TNS provides high-quality information, analysis and insight that improve understanding of consumer behavior. TNS is the world's leading provider of customized services, combining sector knowledge with expertise in the areas of Product Development & Innovation, Brand & Communications, Stakeholder Management, Retail & Shopper and Customer Intelligence. TNS is a major supplier of consumer panel, media intelligence and audience measurement services.

TNS is the sixth sense of business™. www.tnsglobal.com

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