

CARU[®] NEWS

For Immediate Release

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FIREFLY MOBILE WORKS WITH CARU TO PROTECT CHILDREN'S PRIVACY ONLINE

New York, NY – December 20, 2005 – The Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., is pleased to announce that Firefly Mobile has modified its Website, www.FireflyMobile.com to implement neutral age screening, to better comply with the *Self-Regulatory Guidelines for Children's Advertising* (the *Guidelines*) and protect children's online privacy.

CARU, the children's advertising industry's self-regulatory forum, was directed to the Website by a print advertisement for a Firefly Sweepstakes in the September 2005 issue of Nickelodeon magazine, during its routine monitoring of print advertisements. FireflyMobile.com is a mixed-audience Website with features of interest to both children and their parents, relating to Firefly's kid-appealing mobile cell phone product. CARU found that the site was collecting personally identifiable information (PII) for its sweepstakes and e-newsletter registration without effectively screening children for age or obtaining parental consent from children under 13.

Under CARU's *Guidelines* and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), prior parental permission is required before site operators can collect PII from children under 13. Moreover, neutral age-screening mechanisms must be in place, so as not to encourage children to provide inaccurate information to avoid obtaining parental permission.

Firefly responded by implementing neutral age-screening mechanisms on all pages of its Website which request PII from a user. It also implemented session cookie technology to prevent the user from circumventing the age-screening mechanisms. Firefly also immediately removed a link to a Website that did not utilize neutral-age screening, in order to better comply with CARU's *Guidelines*.

CARU's inquiry was conducted under NAD/CARU/NARB Procedures for Voluntary Self-Regulation of National Advertising. Details of the inquiry, CARU's decision and the advertiser's response will be included in the next NAD/CARU Case Report.

For a copy of the decision or for press inquiries, please contact Linda Bean, Director of Communications, 212-705-0129.

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The National Advertising Review Council (NARC) was formed in 1971 by the Association of National Advertisers, Inc. (ANA), the American Association of Advertising Agencies, Inc. (AAAA), the American Advertising Federation, Inc. (AAF), and the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. (CBBB). Its purpose is to foster truth and accuracy in national advertising through voluntary self-regulation. NARC is the body that

establishes the policies and procedures for the CBBB's National Advertising Division (NAD), the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU), and the National Advertising Review Board (NARB).

NAD and CARU are the investigative arms of the advertising industry's voluntary self-regulation program. Their casework results from competitive challenges from other advertisers, and also from self-monitoring traditional and new media, including the Internet. The National Advertising Review Board (NARB), the appeals body, is a peer group from which ad-hoc panels are selected to adjudicate those cases that are not resolved at the NAD/CARU level. This unique, self-regulatory system is funded entirely by the business community; CARU is financed by the children's advertising industry, while NAD/NARB's sole source of funding is derived from membership fees paid to the Council of Better Business Bureaus.