

CARU NEWS

For Immediate Release

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OPERATOR OF ONLINE COMMUNITY WORKS WITH CARU TO PROTECT KIDS

New York, NY – April 27, 2005 - The Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., the children's advertising industry's self-regulatory forum, is pleased to announce that it has worked successfully with the operator of **www.kids-online.com** in order to modify his Website to comply with CARU's *Self-Regulatory Guidelines for Children's Advertising* (the *Guidelines*). The Website came to the attention of CARU through its routine monitoring of the Internet.

The www.kids-online.com Website gives children the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities, including posting on the message boards, joining a chat room, and signing up for the Website's newsletter. After a brief review, CARU found that the Website used tip off language when age screening and did not have session cookies implemented in order to prohibit children under 13 from going back into the browser and registering as adults. Also, the Website contained inappropriate advertising for a matchmaking site, which also did not age screen its users.

CARU has taken the position that in order to responsibly address the child audience, Websites that potentially appeal to children should implement neutral age screening along with a tracking mechanism. In addition, CARU's *Guidelines* state that products and content which are inappropriate for children should not be advertised or promoted directly to children.

The operator recognized all the issues brought forth by CARU and immediately pulled the advertisement in question from the Website. Furthermore, the operator took the services in question offline until they are redesigned and re-implemented in accordance of CARU *Guidelines*.

CARU's inquiry was conducted under NAD/NARB/CARU 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. Members of the press who wish to see a copy of the decision now should email elascoutx@caru.bbb.org.

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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.