

CARU® NEWS

Immediate Release

Contact: Linda Bean
212.705.0129

CARU REVIEWS LEBRON JAMES WEBSITE

Website Operator Works with CARU to Bring Site into Compliance with Privacy Protections

New York, NY – November 20, 2006 – The Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., has recommended that Maniacal Marketing, LLC, operator of the Website www.lebronjames.com, take steps to ensure that children under 13 cannot disclose personally identifiable information while visiting the site. The company has agreed to do so.

The Website came to the attention of the Children’s Advertising Review Unit (“CARU”) through its routine monitoring practices.

Basketball star LeBron James has recently appeared in television advertisements during children’s programming for Bubblicious gum. In addition, the Bubblicious Website, featured in a print advertisement in the September issue of *Nickelodeon* magazine, a child-targeted publication, had a homepage with a prominent link to the LeBron James Website.

At the time of its initial review, CARU noted the following:

- The site’s registration required all visitors, including those under 13 years of age, to disclose PII (retained by the operator), without prior consent of parents.
- The site’s Forums allowed all visitors, regardless of age, to post messages, without parental consent; and,
- The site’s privacy policy was not consistent with its actual practices and was not in compliance with the CARU’s *Self-Regulatory Guidelines for Children’s Advertising* (the *Guidelines*) and the federal Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

The operator, when contacted by CARU, responded by implementing a neutral age-screening mechanism, installing a tracking mechanism to prevent underage users from registering and deleting the personally identifiable information of underage users.

“Maniacal Marketing was pleased to work with CARU on making changes to ensure compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act and CARU's Guidelines,” the company said in its advertiser’s statement. “Not only did we immediately make the changes noted by CARU in the decision, we have already reviewed our files and deleted any personally identifiable information collected from children who were under 13 when the information was disclosed.”

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) and Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU), as well as for the National Advertising Review Board (NARB) and Electronic Retailing Self-Regulation Program (ERSP).

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. 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/NARC/NARB's sole source of funding is derived from membership fees paid to the CBBB. Funding for ERSP is derived from membership in the Electronic Retailing Association. For more information about advertising self regulation, please visit www.narcpartners.org.