

# CARU<sup>®</sup> NEWS

Immediate Release

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## **CARU REVIEWS TOY STATE WEBSITE**

*CARU Recommends Changes; Operator Takes Immediate Steps to Comply*

*New York, NY – April. 10, 2008* – The Children’s Advertising Review Unit of the Council of Better Business Bureaus has recommended that **Toy State Inc.**, operator of the Website, [www.roadrippers.com](http://www.roadrippers.com), modify the site to better protect children’s privacy. The site operator has taken steps to do so.

CARU, the children’s advertising industry’s self-regulatory forum, monitors Websites directed to children under the age of 13 to assure that the sites comply with CARU’s self-regulatory guidelines for children’s advertising and the federal Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

CARU examined the Website pursuant to CARU’s ongoing monitoring program. The site was featured during a national television commercial for Road Rippers.

The Website featured promotions, games and activities on various Toy State products. An activity called “Ripp’s Libbs” involved choosing words from several drop down menus to create a humorous and fictitious certificate for Ripp’s Custom Car Design Crew. After making his selections, the visitor was asked for a first and last name which appeared on a certificate and could be printed out by the visitor.

The Website contained a “contact us” section where a visitor could submit a question to the Website about a Toy State product and could also check an option to receive future communications about Toy State products and promotions. It asked for first name and email address and, below this, it stated, “Please check here if you are under the age of 13.”

CARU’s questioned whether the Website provided an effective age screen to determine if parental consent or notice was required. Specifically, CARU was concerned that the language used to confirm whether a user was over the age of 13 was not expressed in a neutral manner and might invite a child to misrepresent his age.

Further, CARU questioned whether the Website’s privacy policy provided consistent descriptions of its collection practices and whether it collected more personal information than was necessary to participate in certain activities on the site.

Upon its review of the Website, CARU determined that the site did not provide an effective age screen, found that its privacy policy was inconsistent with its data-collection practices and determined that the site collected more personally identifiable information from children than was necessary.

During the course of the CARU inquiry, the company took immediate steps to comply with CARU’s recommendations.

The company, in its advertiser's statement, said it "accepts CARU's decision in its entirety and agrees to modify its Website to comply with CARU's *Guidelines* and COPPA."

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

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**About advertising self-regulation:** 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 the 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. ERSR's funding is derived from membership in the Electronic Retailing Association. For more information about advertising self regulation, please visit [www.narcpartners.org](http://www.narcpartners.org).