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OTA Pushes For Protection of Consumer Choice and Privacy *"Online safety report cards" to be issued for leading business sectors*

Seattle, WA – October 6, 2009 – Coinciding with the kickoff of National Cyber Security Awareness Month, the [Online Trust Alliance](#) (OTA) today announced the release of its [Online Trust Principles](#), a set of global guidelines for preserving and enhancing consumer trust and confidence.

In an era of data breaches, e-crime, malicious exploits and diminished business accountability, OTA is calling on leading commerce sites and banks to demonstrate their commitment to consumer protection by adopting the Online Principles. With the explosive growth of online communication and commerce, companies have accumulated large amounts of personally identifiable data about their customers. To avert a crisis in customer confidence, they must now make good data stewardship a corporate imperative. OTA believes the Principles are the foundation for both protecting consumers from malicious online behavior as well as reassuring them about the companies they've entrusted with their sensitive data.

OTA first released a draft of its Online Principles for comment in April 2009. Based on feedback from across the industry, the revised Principles further underscore the needs and opportunities for business accountability, data stewardship and business practices that improve consumer choice, preference and control of data.

"One of the biggest challenges we face as a leader in direct marketing is protecting our respected brand name and customer loyalty. This comes down to meticulously safeguarding the consumers who continue to trust us with their personal information," said Sal Tripi, Senior Director of Operations & Compliance for Publishers Clearing House. "As a member of the steering committee, Publishers Clearinghouse fully supports OTA's efforts to help thwart malicious online activity and give power back to the consumers and the brands they do business with online."

While intended to thwart abuse and enhance data security, OTA's Online Principles also help preserve the benefits consumers receive from online resources, such as access to free content, email and related services supported by advertising. Companies that adopt the Principles in demonstrating good online citizenship will recognize a competitive advantage in differentiating their brands in the marketplace.

"With the onslaught of deceptive email and online crime, it is incumbent on all businesses to adopt these Principles to not only help protect their customers but their digital brands and stockholders," said Craig Spiegle, Executive Director of OTA. "Left unchecked, we risk a consumer trust meltdown. Businesses who adopt these Principles will win consumer trust and realize a competitive advantage."

"The Principles afford benefits not only for consumers but also for those businesses that support them," said John Scarrow, General Manager, Safety Services, Microsoft Corporation. "As a founding member of OTA, Microsoft supports these Principles and looks forward to working with OTA and the Internet community to adopt these and other practices, with the ultimate goal of providing consumers with added protection and control of their data and online privacy."

Not unlike health departments who publically post scores for restaurants, similar online compliance needs to be established and reported. Such information can aid consumers in making informed choices regarding the security and privacy practices of the sites they frequent. OTA is committed to issuing online safety report cards on the Fortune 100, Interactive Retail 100 and top financial institutions. It is OTA's goal to work with organizational and industry partners to implement tracking and reporting by mid-2010.

The Principles will be presented at the upcoming 2009 Online Trust Summit on October 29, 2009, in Philadelphia. Featured speakers including leading interactive brands including Bank of America, eHarmony, Federal Trade Commission, Memolink, Inc., Microsoft, Publishers Clearing House, TRUSTe, Visa and the US Postal Service. Being underwritten in part by leading OTA members including DigiCert, DMi Partners, MarkMonitor, Memolink, Message Systems, Microsoft, Port 25 Solutions, Secunia and TRUSTe, the Summit is open to the public. The agenda and registration information is available at <https://www.otalliance.org/events/Phila09.html>.

Principles <https://www.otalliance.org/resources/principles.html>

About The Online Trust Alliance (OTA) <https://otalliance.org/>

OTA's mission is to create a trusted global online ecosystem and foster the elimination of email and Internet fraud, abuse and cybercrime; thereby enhancing trust, confidence, and the protection of businesses and consumers. OTA is governed by a Board and Steering Committee including Bank of America, BoxSentry, Datran Media, Epsilon, Goodmail Systems, Iconix, Internet Identity, Intersections, Lashback, Cisco Systems, MarkMonitor, Message Systems, Microsoft Corporation, McAfee, Publishers Clearing House, Return Path, Secunia, Symantec Corporation and VeriSign.

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