

TACD

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DES CONSOMMATEURS

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CHILDREN AND ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

Electronic commerce (e-commerce) will have an enormous impact on children's lives. The Internet will provide children with many new opportunities for learning, civic engagement, community building, and new forms of creativity. New forms of electronic media may also have potentially negative effects on children's lives. For example, the Internet, Digital Television, and other forms of electronic media allow for the "one-to-one" targeted marketing.

Children, particularly younger children, are more vulnerable to advertising and commercial messages. Small children also have difficulties distinguishing between advertising and programming. Other studies suggest negative effects of food, alcohol and tobacco advertising to children on public health. Further, many parents and consumer groups are concerned with the impact of advertising on the development of children's values, particularly materialism.

Resolved:

Children must be able to take advantage of the benefits of new digital media in a safe environment. TACD recommends that appropriate safeguards are put in place by governments of the US and EU based upon the following principles.

1. Data collectors should not collect personal information from children unless it is relevant, necessary and lawful.
2. Parents should be involved when data are collected from young children. Therefore, data collectors must be required to obtain parental consent prior to data collection from young children.
3. Advertising and promotions targeted at children should be clearly identifiable as such and separated from content.
4. There should be limitations on advertising to children, for example with regard to the products or the manner in which they are sold or promoted. Business should not take advantage of children's credulity and lack of experience.
5. Every child should have affordable access to high quality educational and cultural information and services. There should be non-commercial spaces and electronic commons akin to public playgrounds, where children can safely explore, play, create, learn, and participate in civic life.