

Preliminary eHealth Ethics Summit Release

Privacy

*Report on the Privacy Policies and
Practices of Health Web Sites*

Sponsored by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consumer health care on the Internet has moved beyond its infancy and childhood, firmly into an awkward adolescence. While it is increasing in reach, scope, capacity, and independence, it is not mature enough to be predictable and reliable. Although health Web sites now provide a wide range of clinical and diagnostic information; opportunities to purchase products and services; interactions among consumers, patients, and health care professionals; and the capability to build a personalized health record, they have not matured enough to guarantee the quality of the information, protect consumers from product fraud or inappropriate prescribing, or guarantee the privacy of individuals' information. This last point is the subject of this report.

Health care Web sites have access to an unprecedented amount of personal information about consumers. What are their policies about the privacy of that information? How easily can consumers find and understand them? Do they afford sufficient protection? And do the actual practices of the health sites reflect their stated policies?

This report presents a profile of the policies and practices of 21 health-related Web sites. The sites were selected to represent a mix of the most trafficked consumer health sites in the following categories: sites where consumer desire for anonymity might be more precious, sites where pharmaceuticals and health products may be researched and purchased, general search engines or portals that get a high degree of Internet traffic, and sites that target a specific demographic.

We have reviewed the privacy policies of each site and investigated whether their actual practices reflect their stated policies. The method of this investigation was (1) to review the stated privacy policies against a set of "fair information practice principles" and (2) to behave like a typical consumer on each site and observe and capture what happened to the data that was submitted.

It should be pointed out that these privacy policies and these actual practices were those in force during the month of January 2000, when this research was conducted. Given the degree of change and

volatility in the Internet in general and in health care on the Internet in particular, we expect (and in fact hope) that some of the policies and practices will change.

These are the major findings of the investigative research:

1. Visitors to health Web sites are not anonymous, even if they think they are.

Through mechanisms such as cookies, profiling, banner ads, and clickstreams, sites are collecting information about individuals, often without their knowledge or consent.

2. Health Web sites recognize consumers' concern about the privacy of their personal health information and have made efforts to establish privacy policies; however, the policies fall short of truly safeguarding consumers.

Most sites do not meet minimum fair information practices—such as providing adequate notice, giving users some control over their information, and holding business partners to the same privacy standards.

3. There is inconsistency between the privacy policies and the actual practices of health Web sites.

Numerous examples of practices that appear to contradict the stated privacy policies were uncovered. For example, on a number of sites personally identified information is collected through the use of cookies and banner advertisements by third parties without the host sites disclosing this practice. There are also instances where personally identified data is transferred to third parties in direct violation of stated privacy policies.

4. Consumers are using health Web sites to better manage their health, but their personal health information may not be adequately protected.

Even with the best intentions, many sites do not have adequate security in place to protect consumer information from the casual hacker or someone actively seeking to access company databases.

5. Health Web sites with privacy policies that disclaim liability for the actions of third parties on the site negate those very policies.

Few health sites maintain a chain of trust with third parties on their site because they do not hold those parties to the same

privacy standards they espouse. Whatever privacy protections exist often do not follow the visitor's data once it leaves the site.

Our intention in conducting and releasing this research is not to embarrass or single out particular health Web sites or to scare consumers away from getting valuable health information. Rather we aspire to alert consumers and the industry to an impending problem so the industry can address the problem before it becomes acute.

INTRODUCTION

Current estimates are that the Internet offers at least 17,000 different health care sites, underscoring the large and growing demand for access to health-related information and services online. Of the estimated 110 million Internet users, some 24.8 million U.S. adults have searched for health information on the Internet, with the number projected to grow to more than 30 million this year.

Consumers can now obtain a widening array of health care information and transact a growing number of health services online—from accessing information about symptoms, possible diagnoses, and remedies for hundreds of diseases and ailments to comparing rates, and signing up for health insurance. Widespread information and online communities are beginning to turn health care into a consumer-driven experience and are beginning to change the relationship between physicians and their patients.

While business-to-consumer health care commerce is expected to grow to \$70 billion by 2003, business-to-business health care commerce is expected to become a \$170 billion industry over the same period. Although health care is a relative latecomer to e-commerce, most analysts would agree that the long-term potential of online health services is enormous.

With this virtual explosion of e-health activity on the Web, the importance of establishing ethical practices and safeguarding the privacy of personal health information is critical to establishing consumer confidence and trust in this new medium. Recently issued draft federal privacy regulations offer broad protection for the electronic transmission, storage, or maintenance of identifiable health information, but only health care providers (including pharmacies), health plans, and health care data clearinghouses are required to comply with them. Many of the new e-health companies and services now proliferating on the Web are outside of this definition, yet they collect and store vast amounts of personal health information.

In recent years, a number of studies have been released on the privacy policies and practices of Web sites. To highlight a few:

- In a 1997 study, the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) found that few Web sites had privacy policies and that the existing privacy policies were weak and inconsistent.¹
- In 1997, the Center for Democracy and Technology surveyed Web users and found that the “overwhelming majority” avoided registering at Web sites because of privacy concerns.²
- In 1998, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued a report on privacy online. The FTC’s survey of more than 1,400 commercial Web sites notes “industry’s efforts to encourage voluntary adoption of the most basic fair information practice principle—notice—have fallen far short of what is needed to protect consumers.” Only fourteen percent of health Web sites provided notice with respect to their information practices.³
- In June 1999, Professor Mary Culnan at the Georgetown University School of Business surveyed 361 top commercial Web sites and found that thirty-five percent of the sites did not post privacy policies or statements, although many of them were collecting some personal information. Furthermore, those that did have a privacy statement did not comprehensively address fair information practices.⁴
- The most recent survey by EPIC found that 82 of 100 of the most popular commercial Web sites now post privacy policies, although most of those policies do not comprehensively address fair information practices.⁵

On the whole, it appears that while Web sites are generally more attentive to the need for privacy policies—as evidenced by the growing number of sites with privacy policies—these policies still fall far short of a comprehensive privacy scheme.

Public Concern

Against this backdrop, numerous surveys continue to document public concerns about privacy and the Internet.

- A 1999 study conducted by AT&T found that eighty-seven percent of Internet users are concerned about online threats to their privacy.⁶

- A 1999 study conducted by the National Consumers League found that consumers are unwilling or reluctant to engage in certain conduct online, such as providing credit card numbers (seventy-three percent); financial information (seventy-three percent); or personal information (seventy percent) to commercial Web sites.⁷
- A 1999 Business Week/Louis Harris poll confirms that Americans care deeply about their privacy and that their concerns about the lack of privacy online are keeping many would-be users off the Internet. Almost two-thirds of non-Internet users would be more likely to start using the Internet if the privacy of their “personal information and communications would be protected.” Privacy was the number-one reason individuals are choosing to stay off the Internet, coming in well ahead of cost, concerns about complicated technology, and concerns about unsolicited commercial e-mail.⁸
- A 2000 poll conducted by Cyber Dialogue found that forty percent of women who have never made a purchase online cited concerns over privacy, security, and the lack of Internet regulation as the major barriers.⁹

The public’s concerns about Internet privacy are significantly heightened with regard to safeguarding their personal health information online. A survey of 1,009 U.S. adults, released in January 2000 by the California HealthCare Foundation and the Internet Healthcare Coalition found that:

- Seventy-five percent of people are concerned about health Web sites sharing information without their permission.
- A significant percentage of people would not engage in certain health-related activities because of their concerns about privacy and security: Forty percent of people would not give a doctor online access to their medical records, twenty-five percent would not buy or refill prescriptions, and sixteen percent would not register at sites.
- Seventeen percent of people don’t even go online merely to seek health information due to their concerns over privacy.

The good news is that nearly eighty percent of people say that the existence of a privacy policy that provides them with the ability to make choices about how and whether their information is shared has a *positive* impact on their willingness to engage in online health activities.

This report, commissioned by the California HealthCare Foundation, looks specifically at the privacy policies and practices of health care Web sites. Do health sites have privacy policies? Are the policies visible, understandable, and comprehensive? Do the policies adequately safeguard the information consumers submit, whether to join a disease-specific discussion group or to sign up for health insurance? Most important, are the stated policies an accurate reflection of the actual information practices of the health sites and companies that operate them? These and other questions are thoroughly explored.

¹ See "Surfer Beware: Personal Privacy and the Internet," 1997, at <http://www.epic.org/reports/surfer-beware.html>.

² See "Privacy not Price Keeping People off the Internet," at <http://www.cdt.org/privacy/survey/findings/surveyframe.html>.

³ See "Privacy Online: A Report to Congress," June 1998 at <http://www.ftc.gov/reports/privacy3/toc.htm>.

⁴ See Georgetown Internet Privacy Policy Survey, 1999, at <http://www.msb.edu/faculty/culnanm/gippshome.html>.

⁵ See "Surfer Beware III: Privacy Policies without Privacy Protection," December 1999, at <http://www.epic.org/reports/surfer-beware3.html>.

⁶ See "Beyond Concern: Understanding Net Users' Attitudes about Online Privacy," at <http://www.research.att.com/projects/privacystudy>.

⁷ See National Consumers League, "Consumers and the 21st Century," 1999.

⁸ See *Business Week*, March 16, 1999.

⁹ California HealthCare Foundation and Internet HealthCare Coalition, "Ethics Survey of Consumer Attitudes About Health Web Sites," January 2000.

METHODOLOGY

There are approximately 17,000 health-related Web sites that range in purpose and function from grassroots, disease-specific support groups to commercial sites that sell prescription drugs. Many Web sites are becoming increasingly “vertical,” adding function after function, and these functions and services increasingly overlap. Sites that just a few months ago may have provided only information now provide customized information, medical advice, chat rooms, and the ability to purchase products online. To provide those customized services, some health sites collect information about their visitors to “serve them better” and, in the process, learn what consumers want and where they buy. The collection of this data happens in many ways and with varying degrees of notice as to why and for whom it is being collected. Health Web sites may collect data on users through registration forms, online surveys, and e-mail, as well as, almost invisibly, through the use of cookies and banner advertisements.

Site Selection Criteria

For the purposes of this study, we selected 21 health-related Web sites to examine, focusing on their privacy policies and practices. This section describes our criteria for site selection, review of privacy policies, and the investigation of the actual practices of the sites in light of those policies. We wanted to explore primarily the health care consumer experience on the Internet—that is, what someone searching for health products or services would encounter online. To narrow the field, we selected sites with high traffic and visibility and grouped the sites into four categories.

- General consumer health sites where someone may find a wide range of information and services relevant to health care and health issues: www.drkoop.com, www.webmd.com, www.mediconsult.com, www.mayohealth.com, www.healthcentral.com, and www.intelihealth.com.

- Disease-specific sites where consumer desire for anonymity might be more crucial: www.oncolink.com (cancer), www.cansearch.org (cancer), www.thebody.com (HIV/AIDS), hivinsite.ucsf.edu (HIV/AIDS), and www.mhnet.org (mental health).
- Health retail sites where pharmaceuticals and health products may be researched and purchased: www.planetrx.com, www.drugstore.com, www.cvs.com, and www.mothernature.com.
- General search engines or portals that get a high degree of Internet traffic per media matrix statistics: www.yahoo.com, www.altavista.com, and www.excite.com.¹
- Sites that target a specific demographic or type of user: www.onhealth.com (women), www.ivillage.com (women), and www.medscape.com (physicians).

Policy Review

First developed and published in the 1973 government report *Records, Computers, and the Rights of Citizens*,² Fair Information Practice Principles have served as the basis for evaluating and establishing the policies and rules that underlie most privacy laws and practices. Codes of Fair Information Practice Principles have been adapted by many governmental and private entities, including the Federal Trade Commission and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in its privacy guidelines.³

For this study, we measured the privacy policies and practices of Internet health Web sites against the following criteria, based on Fair Information Practice Principles.

- Notice: People should be informed about how their information will be used and by whom.
- Access and Control: People should be given the opportunity to see, copy, and correct their records; people should be given meaningful opportunities to make choices about how their information will be used.
- Security: Information should be collected, maintained, and disclosed in a manner that safeguards personal information.
- Chain of Trust: Privacy protections should follow the users' data. In other words, when information is used or disclosed, the same privacy protections should be in effect.⁴

These criteria are explained more fully in our findings. Upon review of the privacy policy, sites were given a yes, no, maybe or N/A (not applicable) for each of the criteria.

Practices on Web Sites

To investigate the privacy practices of each health Web site, we behaved like a typical user of the site and observed how personal data was handled by the site and its affiliates. These observations were then compared with the site's privacy policy. We also reviewed the Web site's "terms of service" agreement for additional information practices of the site, where available. Where the practice indicated a reason for concern, or contradicted the policy, we placed an alarm clock on the chart. (See appendices.)

Particular attention was paid to data collection points at the sites. Sites often ask users to provide information about themselves on Web-based forms. Typical data collection points include: Web site registration, e-mail newsletter subscription, medical history/records, surveys and polls, search strings, and drug interaction queries.

At each of these data collection points the following questions were asked:

1. *To whom is the data sent? Is it to the host site or to another party?*

These questions were answered by looking in the HTML⁵ source code at the action URLvi of the Web form. In most cases, form data is sent back to the host site itself. However, particularly with health assessment programs, the data is sent to other vendors who run the service for the host site.

2. *Is the data that is entered into forms ever accidentally distributed to third parties?*

If a site is not careful with the design of its Web forms, data entered into a form is sent to the Web site in the query string of a URL. If the next Web page to appear contains a banner ad, then the data in the query string will be sent to the ad service company in addition to the host site. We tested for such data leaks by looking at the HTML source code to see if the potential problem existed. If a data leak was possible, then it was verified using a packet sniffer. A packet sniffer is a programmer tool typically used to debug network-based software. A sniffer shows all data sent to and from the Internet from a particular computer.

3. *Is personal data stored securely at the Web site?*

We checked to see if personal information such as registration data, health assessment surveys, and medical records were stored in a secure fashion. Specifically, we verified whether such data required a logon name and password to be accessed. In some cases, private data could be accessed without a password but with only an ID number embedded in a URL. An outsider could access the account with the URL, bypassing the regular login procedure. These URLs can be found in the browser history cache or along an insecure Internet connection.

In addition to looking at data collection points at health sites, we asked other questions about the operation of each site:

1. *Does the Web site use cookies?*

This question was answered by seeing if, as a result of our visiting a site, a cookie file was created on the hard drive of the computer being used.

2. *If a Web site uses banner ads, what third-party ad network company is used by the Web site?*

This question was answered by looking at the HTML source code of Web pages to see what server provides the banner ad images.

3. *Is a banner ad company explicitly given any information about the health conditions that a user is researching?*

To answer this question, we viewed the HTML source code of a health information page and checked each banner ad to see if the type of health condition appeared in the URL of the banner ad.

¹ These sites were in Media Matrix's top ten sites for Internet traffic in November 1999.

² U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1973.

³ The FTC Code of Fair Information Practices also includes the principles of accountability and enforcement, which were beyond the scope of this preliminary study.

⁴ This criterion is not a part of the Code of Fair Information Practices, as articulated by the FTC. This principle, however, is included in several privacy reports, such as *Best Principles for Health Privacy: A Report of the Health Privacy Working Group*, July 1999, available at <http://www.healthprivacy.org>.

⁵ HTML (HyperText Markup Language): The programming language used to format web pages.

⁶ URL (Uniform Resource Locator): Address for Web sites on the Internet.

FINDINGS: PRIVACY POLICIES

This report finds that 19 of the 21 health Web sites surveyed have privacy policies. In comparing this finding with the findings of earlier studies of privacy policies on the Internet, it appears that, generally, health Web sites may be more attentive to the need to develop and post privacy policies than non-health-related Web sites.

It is also encouraging that all of the Web sites posting privacy policies include some prohibition on disclosure of personal information to third parties or business partners. Sixteen Web sites also give users the right to opt in to or out of many specific disclosures such as e-mail newsletters, promotional mailings, and public listings.

Nevertheless, there are significant weaknesses in the policies. For example:

- Privacy policies generally do not provide adequate notice about when and how the information is collected and by whom. Most strikingly, the policies do not address the collection of information by third-party ad networks and by business partners (such as content providers or co-branded services). The notice also often does not adequately mirror the services available at the Web site.
- Only eight sites provide users with access to the personal information that users submitted voluntarily. None of the Web sites we surveyed allow users to access data collected by third-party ad networks or banner advertisements.
- User control is often framed as a choice not to participate at all. As a condition of participation—such as buying a product, making a medical inquiry, or completing a health assessment—users are often told they give up their privacy protections. Users, therefore, may not be able to limit secondary uses or disclosures. The net effect is that most Web sites require users to forgo privacy in order to take advantage of the services being offered.

- The overwhelming majority of sites do not extend their privacy policies to business partners and third parties (such as ad networks). This is especially troublesome because users themselves may not be aware of any distinctions among the Web site owner, business parties, and third parties, and they may divulge information without understanding the consequences.

It is also notable that many of the health Web sites' privacy policies are confusing and inconsistent—both internally and in comparison with the policies of other health Web sites. Many of the policies appear to be written in complex legal terms rather than in the language of laypeople. Finally, there is little consistent language across policies, creating a greater sense of ambiguity. The result is that users may not be able to determine or understand how and when their personal information will be used and disclosed.

About Privacy Policies

How many sites have privacy policies? How does the user find the policy?

16 of the 19 Web sites with privacy policies provide a link to the policy from their homepages.¹ Most commonly, there is a small hyperlink at the bottom of the page buried among other standard information such as terms of service, company information, job opportunities, or links to content. The result is that only users who specifically are in search of a privacy policy are likely to find one. Users simply browsing a site are less likely to click on the privacy policy.

A few sites have made efforts to make the policy slightly more visible. For example, Drkoop.com has an icon of a lock next to the hyperlink, which draws attention to the policy.

Of the sites with privacy policies, **15 have the hyperlink on additional pages.** Such a practice is particularly important so that the user may be reminded to check the privacy policy before entering information or accessing services.

Better yet is when the site itself prompts the user to read the privacy policy before entering personal information. Some sites require proactive acceptance of a "User Agreement" before using special services such as an online medical record or a health assessment. The agreement includes the privacy policy.

Where does the privacy policy apply?

Even when Web sites have privacy policies, it may not be easy for the user to determine when the policy applies. Some sites exempt business partners from their privacy policies. Still others may lead a user off their site, in which case the privacy policy will not apply. Users, however, may or may not be aware that they have left the site.

When AltaVista users click on “Health and Fitness” and then choose to go to “Health,” they are jumped to www.health.altavista.com. This site still has the AltaVista logo and indicates that it is “powered” by HealthCentral. As soon as users click on an option, however, the URL changes to www.healthcentral.com. At this point, the AltaVista privacy policy does not apply. Users are not notified that they have moved sites, and the AltaVista logo still appears on all pages.

iVillage has three distinct privacy policies, two of which are specific to health-related services. One is for iVillage generally and appears on all pages. On the health channel, however, iVillage contracts with AllHealth, which in turn contracts with WellMed. Three services—My Medical Home, Personal Health Report, and My Health Files—require users to register. (Registration with iVillage is not enough to access the services.) In the registration process, users are invited to review the privacy policies of AllHealth or WellMed (depending on the service).

Privacy endorsements and seals

Of the sites surveyed, TRUSTe endorses nine.² Eight are endorsed by HON, the Health on the Net Foundation’s Code of Conduct for medical and health Web sites.³ These seal programs enter into a licensing contract with the seal-holding Web site. The contract allows the site to display the seal if the site abides by a set of standards for handling personal information. The seal is intended to operate as a “Good Housekeeping seal of approval” for the site’s privacy policy and practices. TRUSTe also allows a user to report a suspected or real violation of the site’s privacy policy.

Seal programs have been credited with raising the bar of privacy protection on Web sites generally. It does appear that the seal programs have helped to create some degree of consistency among Web sites’ privacy policies—at least in terms of the issues addressed. The programs, however, have also been criticized as falling short of fully embracing fair information practice principles.⁴

While this report notes which seal programs the sites use, at this juncture we take no position on the strength or enforceability of the programs.

Notice to User

What is most important here is whether the user was given notice of information practices, not whether the policy itself is desirable. Once notified, the user is in a better position to make decisions about what information to share, what uses or disclosures to allow, or even whether to visit the site at all.

Policy states who is collecting information

Most sites examined do not explicitly state who is collecting information; they imply that the sponsor/owner of the site is the sole collector of information. Only CVS.com is absolutely clear about who is collecting the information. Its policy states: “CVS.com is the sole collector and owner of this information.”

Notifying users about *who* is collecting information is particularly important for health sites that have business partners or banner advertisements, because these companies may be able to collect information independently. **Of the 11 sites examined that have third-party ad networks, only five indicate in their privacy policies that the network are able to collect information about the user.**⁵ This notice is especially important because such data collection is invisible to the user, but the companies have the ability to collect a great deal of information on users.

Policy states what information is collected

The sites examined vary widely in terms of what information is collected—some do not collect any information. Others collect Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, lab results, insurance information, and information about health status. Policies may state in broad terms what information is collected. Intellihealth.com, for example, states that “whenever we ask for personal information...we will clearly disclose what information is required, what information is optional...”

Several policies attempt to describe the kind of information collected in the privacy policy but fall short of accurately describing *all* of the information collected on the site.

Most commonly, notice of the type of information collected is provided as the user enters the information.

Policy states when and how information is collected

Eighteen sites tell users when and how information is collected.

However, several sites examined attempt to describe their information collection methods but don't do so adequately. Mayohealth.org, for example, gives notice about surveys, health bulletins, and questions submitted to physicians, but does not mention health assessments.

Thirteen sites include a discussion of cookies in the privacy policy, which helps the user understand how information is collected involuntarily (without the user's express permission). To some degree, people can control cookie use, making it more voluntary if they know about cookies and choose to use them to remember passwords, etc.

Policy states how and when information will be used and disclosed

Fifteen sites examined notify users about how information will be used and disclosed.

Overall, there is very little distinction in privacy policies between use and disclosure. Use is usually understood to mean activities undertaken by the company itself with regard to the information. Disclosure of information refers to activities involving an outside organization or third party.

When sites notify users about how they will *use* information, they use broad terms. For example, Drkoop.com notifies users only that the information will be used to "provide you with a superior shopping experience." Other sites provide more detail: Medscape.com notifies users about seven distinct uses, with an explanation of each.

Web sites are much more likely to notify users about what they consider disclosure. Many sites include a broad statement indicating that they will not disclose information to third parties, but they do not discuss uses. For example, Onhealth.com's privacy policy assures users that the site "will never release your name, street address, telephone number or e-mail address without your consent." Presumably, the site could *use* the information for any number of purposes without violating its own privacy policy.

Still other sites notify users that their information will not be saved, and therefore will not be used or disclosed beyond the specific application. (See Mayohealth.org.)

Policy states whether visitors will be profiled

Sixteen Web sites provide notice that users are profiled.⁶ Online profiling has been defined as “the practice of aggregating information about consumers’ preferences and interests, gathered primarily by tracking their movements online, and using the resulting consumer profiles to create targeted advertising on Web sites.”⁷ To conduct online profiling, the text files known as “cookies” are placed on users’ computers to store information about their computers and their online activities.

It is not that profiling in and of itself is a bad thing. Profiling, however, does indicate that the site is creating a more comprehensive dossier on users, which in turn is valuable to third parties because it can be used to target marketing to those users. Profiling is often invisible to users and can occur even when users believe themselves to be “anonymous” at a Web site. (This practice is explained more fully in the next chapter, “Practice.”)

It should be noted that a handful of health sites notify users that they *do not* profile users. Mhnet.org’s privacy policy, for example, states that it does “not use information about what you are searching for to help focus the advertisements we present to you. We also do not track search engine usage.”

User Access and Control

A standard component of fair information practices is to give users some control—sometimes in the form of choices—over their personal health information. Here we have focused on two general areas: (1) a user’s ability to see and correct information submitted voluntarily and (2) the right to limit disclosures (by opt-in/opt-outs or a general prohibition on disclosures).

Although we believe that users should also have control over the information collected without their knowledge and consent, for this study we focused only on the control given to people over the information they have submitted voluntarily. Third-party ad networks, for example, collect information on users and may combine it with other information to compile an individually *identifiable* profile. None of the Web sites surveyed, however, provides users with the right to access and correct information submitted on them without their consent.

It is worth mentioning that users have a certain degree of choice at all times: They can choose not to visit a site or they can refuse to

provide certain information. For the purpose of this survey, those options to do not “qualify” as user control. We assume that users want to use the services at these sites and that they are willing to provide some information necessary to receive the service. We looked at the policies to determine what kind of control users had over the information *after* the service was provided.

Right to view information submitted voluntarily

Eight sites examined give users the right to view information submitted voluntarily. This right is usually restricted to information that has an ongoing value to the site, such as registration, health profiles, and online medical records. Even when a site gives users a right to view information, that right is usually not extended when the information is provided in connection with an application with limited usefulness such as surveys and questionnaires.

Right to correct information submitted voluntarily

Ten sites examined allow users to correct information submitted voluntarily. The right to correct information closely follows the right to view information. Some sites bolster the right to correct information by giving users the explicit right to *delete* information from the sites’ databases. Notably, Mhnet.org itself will delete user information if there has been no activity on the account for more than six months.

Right to opt out of or in to specific uses and disclosures

Sixteen sites examined give users the opportunity to opt out of or in to specific uses or disclosures. Most commonly, sites give users the opportunity to affirmatively request (opt in to) membership, a newsletter, promotional e-mails, surveys, contests, or a listing in directory information. However, if the default is set so that a user’s information is automatically shared or used, the user must then request that the site stop the practice (opt out).

Right to limit disclosures

All of the sites with privacy policies include some prohibition on the disclosure of personal health information in their privacy policy. The disclosures use very different language, so it is not immediately apparent as to when information may be disclosed. For instance, some Web sites prohibit disclosures to “third parties,” and others prohibit disclosures to “other organizations.” To complicate matters further, some Web sites distinguish between “business partners” and “third parties.”

In an attempt to review Web sites with consistent criteria, we grouped entities that may receive personal health information from the site owner into three categories and then examined the privacy policy to determine whether the user could limit disclosure to the entity.

1. *Affiliates, suppliers, and agents*: Companies that have contractual relationships with the Web site owner and are acting on behalf of the Web site owner such as suppliers, agents and contractors. Activities may include maintaining the Web site, fulfilling orders for products and services, and analyzing data. This category also includes affiliates: parent companies and subsidiaries of the Web site owner.

Only five sites mention suppliers, agents, and affiliates in these terms.⁷ Of these sites, **only one allows users to limit a disclosure**: CVS.com allows users to limit disclosure to a local CVS store. The other four sites reference suppliers, agents or affiliates simply to notify users that they may not limit disclosures.

2. *Business partners*: Organizations or companies that provide services together with the Web site, but where there is no common ownership.

Fourteen sites specifically mention business partners in their privacy policies. Of these sites, **nine allow users to restrict disclosures and three do not**⁸. For the most part, however, users are able to limit disclosures only if they choose not to participate in the service at all. Users do not have the right to limit secondary disclosures. At Thebody.com, participation requires the user to “authorize” the site to “release any and all health information” to clinical researchers and laboratories at the site’s discretion. Users are not given any control over secondary disclosures, or other uses of their health information.

3. *Third parties*: All other companies or organizations. This category includes advertisers and third-party ad networks. The implication is that “third parties” are invested in making independent use of the data.

Of the sites with privacy policies, fourteen limit disclosures to all third parties. Typically, the policy includes a blanket statement indicating that the site will not disclose information. Of these sites, Planetrx.com is typical: “will never willfully sell, trade, rent, disclose or make available personally identifiable information about you to any third party without first receiving your permission...”

As the report later indicates, this is an area where policy clearly does not match practice. Other entities may be able to *collect* information

on users directly, without their knowing it (as is the case with third-party ad networks). The information, therefore, has been effectively disclosed without permission.

Four sites—Altavista.com; Excite.com; Ivillage.com; and Webmd—do in fact notify users that advertisers may collect information, and so they earned a “no” in this category even though they should be credited with providing notice.

Security

Eleven sites examined include a description of the security measures in place to protect information from unauthorized access. The most common forms identified in the policies are the use of encryption for information transmitted over the Internet, password protection, and authentication.

We also note that **six sites distinguish security measures for “sensitive” information** (as defined by the Web site). Some sites may keep credit card information on a separate server that is not accessible by e-mail, or they may limit internal access to select employees. This figure, however, may be slightly misleading because a few Web sites protect *all* health information with the same high standards and would therefore have no reason to implement different measures for sensitive information.

Chain of Trust

Three sites—Onhealth.com; PlanetRX.com; and Mothernature.com—state that they will never release or share information without qualification. If this is true, these sites have no need to establish chain-of-trust agreements because the data is not disclosed. Moreover, these sites do not have advertisers.

Fourteen sites mention business partners in their privacy policies. Of these sites, **six explicitly do not bind business partners to their privacy policies**. Webmd.com, for example, states that with regard to its vendors, “we cannot guarantee their compliance with these restrictions.” Seven are silent on whether they bind business partners.

Only Oncolink.com binds business partners to their privacy policy. The policy states, “business partners...are governed by our privacy policies with respect to the use of [personally identifiable] data.”

Web sites were most likely to divorce themselves from responsibility in the case of banner advertisements and third-party ad networks.

Twelve sites have third party ad networks. **Seven of these sites explicitly do not bind those ad networks to their privacy policies.** Mhnet.org, for example, specifically notifies users that banner advertisers are able to collect information about users but does not bind those companies to Mhnet.org's privacy policies. Instead, it advises the user to contact the companies independently.

Most sites did not indicate in their privacy policy whether they bind business partners or third party ad networks to their privacy policy.

¹ Some sites have a "Privacy Statement" or "Statement on Member Privacy." For simplicity, we refer to all these policies as "privacy policies."

² See <http://www.truste.org>.

³ See <http://www.hon.ch/honcode/conduct.html>.

⁴ See "Privacy Online: A Report to Congress," June 1998 at <http://www.ftc.gov/reports/privacy3/toc.htm>; See "Surfer Beware III: Privacy Policies without Privacy Protection," December 1999, at <http://www.epic.org/reports/surfer-beware3.html>.

⁵ The following sites give notice that third-party ad networks are able to collect information: AltaVista.com; Excite.com; Ivillage.com; Mhnet.org; and Webmd.com. It should be noted that Mhnet provides notice, but it is inaccurate: they claim that advertisers will "never" know who a user is by name, unless the user tells them.

⁶ Some Web sites indicate that they are doing profiling in their privacy policy, but do so through indirect language. Oncolink.com, for example, states that they use information "to personalize our web site for you."

⁷ See FTC Public Workshop Online Profiling, <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/profiling/index.htm>, November 1999.

⁸ These sites are: CVS.com; Drkoop.com; Excite.com; iVillage.com; and Oncolink.com.

⁹ Sites with business partners that explicitly allow users to restrict disclosures include: CVS.com; Drkoop.com; Excite.com; Ivillage.com; Mayohealth.com; Medscape.com; Mhnet.org; Onhealth.com; Planetrx.com; Webmd.com. Altavista.com, Health entral.com, and Oncolink.com notify users about business partners, but explicitly do not allow users to restrict disclosures.

FINDINGS: PRIVACY PRACTICES

This section describes the areas of investigation and findings regarding the privacy practices of the 21 health Web sites examined. Although all of the sites operate somewhat differently, many of the findings described below appear at multiple sites. The charts in the appendices identify the practice problems discovered by individual site.

The investigation produced three general areas of concern regarding the privacy practices of health Web sites:

- Lack of disclosure regarding the collection and potential use of personal information collected through the use of cookies and third-party banner advertisements
- Transfer of personally identifiable data to third parties in direct violation of stated privacy policies
- Lack of adequate security resulting in potential unauthorized access to personal data

To better understand the methodology employed in this investigation, it is important to understand the methods and processes, both visible and invisible to the user, that current Web technologies offer for the collection of information about those who visit health Web sites.

Online Profiling

Profiling is a technique used by Web sites and banner ad networks to track information about a user and the user's online activity. One of the tracking technologies that make profiling possible is called "cookies." **Of the 21 sites reviewed, 18 utilize cookies.**

Cookies are small text files stored on the hard disk of a person's computer. A cookie is activated when a user visits a Web site. Each site has its own cookie file, which is recorded on the user's hard drive. All browsers contain cookies, with the default setting set to "on." A user has the option to turn cookies off in the preference menu of the browser.

Cookie files enable a Web site to know when a user has visited the site. Instead of directly identifying an individual's computer, the cookie file contains a customer ID for the site it represents. A Web site assigns this number the first time a user visits the site. Each time a user returns to the site, and for each page visited at the site, the site is notified by receiving the user's customer ID number. Web sites often use these monitoring systems to create "profiles" of their users.

- Profiles can help deliver desired content to a user, making the user's experience more rewarding.
- Profiles can provide demographic and other information to site operators and potential advertisers about what information a visitor is interested in.
- Profiles help sites determine what information, products, or services are most often used or desired.

A profile for each visitor is generally created and stored in the customer database at a Web site. The profile often contains a collection of sites and pages that the customer ID number has visited. The site is notified of the content areas a user is interested in by the Internet address, or the URL of the Web page, that is viewed. Most health content sites include the name of health conditions in the URL of the pages relevant to that condition.

Here are two examples of URLs for information pages about diabetes:

<http://www.drkoop.com/conditions/diabetes/>
<http://www.allhealth.com/diabetes/0,4264,2080,00.html>

If a user visits one of these URLs, the Web server can save a record of that visit in the user's profile. The site now knows that the user has an interest in diabetes. The more a user reads about diabetes, the more his or her individual profile will indicate an interest in diabetes.

Is information that is collected by cookies anonymous?

An important point to make about Internet profiles is that they are anonymous, as long as the user does not give the Web site, his or her name, or other identifiable information. Since cookies are simply ID numbers assigned by the site, there is no method of automatically matching them to a particular individual. The ID number in a cookie is usually assigned to users on a first-come, first-served basis.

In addition to looking at URLs, Web sites utilize a variety of other methods to profile users who visit their sites. These methods include:

- Registration information submitted voluntarily by a user (name, e-mail address, Zip code, birth date, gender, weight, height, etc.)
- Search strings entered into a search engine
- Health surveys and polls offered by the Web site
- Chat room membership registration
- Personal health records or health histories stored on the Web site
- Personal health assessments offered by the Web site

If an individual provides personally identifiable information at the site, the profile will capture that information and be able to identify the individual from that point forward. When this information is entered into a Web form at the site, the cookie associated with the profile is no longer anonymous. Personal data can then be linked to the customer ID number found in the cookie. Registering with a site can turn what was an anonymous profile into an identifiable profile.

Of the 21 sites reviewed, all 21 provide opportunities for visitors to enter personally identifiable information, including their names and e-mail addresses. Of the 12 categories of potential information a site could collect, the following table indicates how many categories each site utilizes:

Chat rooms/bulletin boards	14
Drug searches/interactions	12
Electronic newsletter	16
E-mail article to colleague/friend	8
Free materials	6
Health assessment	14
Medical consultation	15
Medical history/record	6
Product sales	15
Registration	16
Search strings	21
Surveys/polls	13

Profiling is not generally understood, disclosed, or explained

Most online users do not realize that information is being collected about their online activities without their knowledge. The privacy policies reviewed in this report generally either fail to mention profiling or talk about profiling in very vague terms.

The Drkoop.com's privacy policy implies that no profiling is going on at the site:

The only information drkoop.com obtains about visitors to its Web site is information supplied voluntarily by visitors.¹

However, Drkoop.com's terms of service say the opposite:

The cookie itself does not contain Locator Information although it will enable drkoop.com to relate your use of the site to information that you have specifically and knowingly provided to the site.²

The Mediconsult site does say that profiling is occurring at the site but never indicates what is done with the information collected:

Cookies help us evaluate your use of our site, such as the kind of information you want to see and what kind you will never read.³

The OnHealth site's privacy policy makes no mention of profiling, even though the site does make use of cookies.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has been investigating the practice of online profiling. In late 1999, the FTC established a committee to develop recommendations to make online profiling more transparent and to provide users with more control of the data collection practices of sites.⁴

A number of sites reviewed did acknowledge the practice of profiling. For example, Excite includes this paragraph in its privacy policy on profiling:

We match the patterns of usage that our consumers exhibit on any Web site where we serve advertising—over 2,000 distinct Internet domains—to create “imputed profiles” about our anonymous customers. The creation of an imputed profile allows the Excite@Home Network to statistically model the demographic characteristics of an otherwise anonymous

customer, without ever knowing that anonymous customer's name or any other Personally Identifiable Information about them. These imputed profiles are used to target advertising—primarily banners—to those anonymous customers, both on Excite@Home Network domains and any of the other Internet domains where we serve advertising.⁵

Privacy and the use of banner ads

The most common form of Web advertising is the banner ad. Banner ads typically appear at the top and bottom of Web pages as well as in the left and right margins. Banner ads are designed to encourage users to “click through” to another Web site in order to learn more about the product or service. Advertisers usually pay a few cents each time a banner ad appears on a Web page. In some cases, they pay only if a user clicks on the ad.

Most people are familiar with banner ads because they see them when they visit a site. On average, banner ads are clicked on only one to two percent of the time they are displayed. Each display of a banner ad on a screen is called an ad impression.

Banner ads originate from Internet marketing companies called ad networks. It is more convenient and cost-effective for advertisers to deal with ad networks than to deal directly with many different Web sites. There are more than 20 ad network companies that provide banner ads to Web sites around the world. The largest banner ad network is run by a company called DoubleClick (www.doubleclick.net), which at the time of this investigation had received considerable public attention and scrutiny for its alleged profiling practices. On January 27, 2000, *USA Today* reported that DoubleClick had collected 100 million files about users and their online habits.

A banner ad on a Web page consists of two components: a graphic image of the ad and a link to the advertiser's Web site. The ad network uses both components. The ad network's Web servers send the ad graphic to a user's Web browser and work with the host site to ensure that the proper URL for the ad appears in the HTML source code of the hosting Web page.

How banner ads track user activity

Of the 21 sites examined, 11 utilize ad network services, with eight of those using the services of DoubleClick. As is indicated in the list of sites below, many of the most trafficked health sites utilize DoubleClick, potentially providing DoubleClick with millions of user health profiles.

What is not generally known about banner ads is that they utilize cookies just as Web pages do. An ad network cookie, sometimes referred to as a third-party cookie, belongs to the ad network and operates independently of the host Web site cookie. It operates like a standard cookie, except that data collected by the ad network cookie is sent back to the ad network instead of to the host Web site. These third-party cookies allow an ad network to profile users just as a host Web site cookie does.

A user's movement caused by a banner ad is tracked in the following way: When the user clicks on a link in a banner ad, the click first goes back to the ad network company to make a record of the clicked link. Only then is the user's browser redirected by the ad network's server to the advertiser's Web site.

Banner ad network profiling of users is potentially more problematic because the ad networks can observe what users are doing at all Web sites in their networks, not just at a single site. For example, it is possible for a banner ad company to match an article someone is reading on one Web site with what health condition that person is researching at another health site.

Since Web browsers include the full URL of a page when requesting a banner ad image, a banner ad network can track a user's behavior online. This URL is sent to a server as the referring URL field of an HTTP GET request. Furthermore, information about what page someone is viewing can be passed from the host Web site to the banner ad company in the URL of the banner ad image itself.

For example, at www.drkoop.com, DoubleClick is told someone is looking at a page on diabetes by the fact that the keyword "diabetes" appears in the image URL:

<http://ad.doubleclick.net/ad/dr.koop.dart/diabetes;sz=120x60>

Many other health sites share information in similar ways about what users are doing at their sites. Most of the health sites we examined do not disclose the use of ad network companies at their sites, and none said they are transferring health-related information to the ad networks.

None of the sites examined that use ad networks disclosed whether they are doing profiling. Nor did they explain what is happening with the data being collected by the ad networks. Additionally, the sites using ad networks are silent on whether the networks are sharing data collected with other sites in their networks.

Sites that use DoubleClick

www.altavista.com

www.drkoop.com

www.healthcentral.com

www.ivillage.com

www.mayohealth.org*

www.mediconsult.com

www.onhealth.com*

www.webmd.com

*Serves own ads most of the time.

Some partial answers to these questions can be found at FindLaw's Tech Web site, <http://techdeals.findlaw.com>, which has posted a copy of the 1999 advertising agreement signed between DoubleClick and Drkoop.com. The original agreement was released in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing. Section V of this agreement addresses the ownership of user data and what can be done with it:

It is understood and agreed that Company (in this case Dr.Koop.com) shall have sole and exclusive ownership of all right, title and interest in and to all user data derived from Company's use of the DART Service, that Company hereby grants to DoubleClick an irrevocable, perpetual and royalty-free license to use such user data in connection with business provided, however, that DoubleClick agrees that it shall not disclose such user data to third parties except with Company's prior written consent or except if such user data is appreciated with user data derived by DoubleClick's, or other companies', use of the DART Service that Company-specific user data shall not be identifiable by such third parties. In addition, DoubleClick agrees that any information by which individual users accessing Company's web site(s) through the DART Service can be identified by name or e-mail address shall not be disclosed to any third party without Company's prior written consent.⁶

As this section of the agreement indicates, the data is owned by Drkoop.com but is shared with DoubleClick, which can use it for any business purpose as long as personally identifiable data is not shared with other companies.

In the case of DoubleClick, there are additional issues with privacy and banner ads. In mid-1999, DoubleClick started a series of marketing

programs to identify online users and to associate this information with the DoubleClick cookie. One such program is a sweepstakes promotion at NetDeals (www.netdeals.com), and another is an Internet directory at www.iaf.net. These marketing programs allow DoubleClick to know who is surfing to what Web pages. Even though a health Web site may not know who is coming into a site, DoubleClick just might.

DoubleClick's campaign to identify Web users is linked to its desire to send people more advertisements in the form of e-mail messages and direct mail. Information about this marketing program can be found in the NetDeals legal agreement:

"DoubleClick and Abacus Online use the information you provide to tailor online advertising to a consumer's personal interests and to tailor direct mail advertising and offers."

Of the eight health sites examined that utilize DoubleClick services, only three sites mention banner ads in their privacy policies and not one of the seven sites bind DoubleClick to their privacy policy. It is unclear whether or not these sites are participating in this DoubleClick marketing program.

In November 1999, DoubleClick merged with a marketing company named Abacus Direct, which has a database of 80 million Americans who made purchases from mail order catalogs during the 1990s. In the latest version of the DoubleClick privacy policy, DoubleClick indicates how it plans to match Web users to catalog orders:

In addition, in connection solely with the delivery of ads via DoubleClick's DART technology to one particular Web publisher's Web site, DoubleClick combines the non-personally-identifiable data collected by DoubleClick from a user's computer with the log-in name and demographic data about users collected by the Web publisher and furnished to DoubleClick for the purpose of ad targeting on the Web publisher's Web site. DoubleClick has requested that this information be disclosed on the Web site's privacy statement.⁷

As such, health and other Web sites may be under increased pressure from DoubleClick and other ad network companies to provide more information about their users.

Of the 12 sites reviewed that utilize cookies and employ third-party ad networks, all also offer opportunities for visitors to provide personally identifiable information.

Transfer of Personally Identifiable Data to Third Parties

In this section we examine the practice employed by some health Web sites that transfer personal data to other companies in direct violation of their stated privacy policies. We found two types of problems.

Of the 21 sites reviewed, six offer health assessment instruments, which ask users to enter detailed health information about themselves. The sites involved do not notify users that this information is being transferred to another party. It is difficult to determine which company “owns” the data that is being provided and what might be done with it.

The second problem discovered was the transfer of private data to ad networks, which may in fact be caused by poor Web page design rather than by intention.

Intentional transfer of data to third parties

Of the Web sites examined, those that subcontract with other companies to provide health assessments are:

- OnHealth (www.onhealth.com)
- AllHealth (www.allhealth.com)
- CVS.com (www.cvs.com)
- Yahoo (health.yahoo.com)
- HealthCentral (www.healthcentral.com)
- IntelliHealth (www.intelihealth.com)

The subcontracting companies that provided these services are:

- WellMed (www.wellmed.com) for OnHealth, AllHealth, and IntelliHealth
- CPM, Inc. (www.cpm.com), for CVS.com
- HealthCentral (www.healthcentral.com) for itself and Yahoo

The OnHealth wellness test illustrates how difficult it is to understand where personal health data may be going online. To take the wellness test, OnHealth first requires site registration. As

part of the registration process, a user is asked to provide his or her full name, e-mail address, birthday, and gender. The OnHealth privacy policy assures users that this data remains with OnHealth:

We will never release your name, street address, telephone number or e-mail address without your consent.⁸

However, when a user takes the OnHealth wellness test, his or her registration data is released to another company. WellMed conducts the actual test for OnHealth. Immediately after logging on to the OnHealth Web site with a user name and password for the wellness test, a user's Web browser is redirected to the www.wellmed.com Web site. In addition, the OnHealth registration data is passed to WellMed in an invisible form, which OnHealth created, on its introduction page. Here is what this hidden form looks like in the HTML source code for the page:⁹

```
<form name="HRAuth" method="post"
action=" http://www.wellmed.com/onhealth/connect.asp" >
<input type=hidden name="Start" value="HQ" ><br>
<input type=hidden name="ID"
value=" 896d2a210ab2012d02a184a949034a3f" ><br>
<input type=hidden name="FirstName" value=" John" ><br>
<input type=hidden name="LastName" value=" Doe" ><br>
<input type=hidden name="Sex" value=" male" ><br>
<input type=hidden name="EMail"
value=" doe@mail.net" ><br>
<input type=hidden name="BirthDate"
value=" 11/12/57" ><br>
</form>
```

This transfer of personal data happens before the user is given any details about the test. The use of this hidden HTML form appears to directly contradict the OnHealth privacy policy.

The health assessment test is run entirely from the WellMed Web site. However, the WellMed Web pages are framed by an OnHealth "shell" page, which makes it difficult for users to see where the answers to the test questions are going. For example, the URL shown by the browser is for the OnHealth shell page and not the WellMed page, which is where the work is actually taking place.

The only mention of WellMed during the Wellness test is on a special agreement page for the test. This page makes it clear that WellMed runs the test and that they are capturing the data. To take the test asks a user to accept the agreement. However, the

opening page of the test does not show the agreement. Instead the opening page has a link to the agreement that the user must click on to be able to read it. The agreement page itself does not disclose what happens to the personal data entered into the test, so the user must click again to see the disclosure statement that test answers will be used for marketing purposes by WellMed.

The AllHealth Web site also makes use of the same health assessment test from WellMed, but AllHealth is more explicit that the test is conducted in partnership with WellMed. However, AllHealth also transfers registration data such as the user's name, age, and e-mail address to WellMed before the user has been informed that WellMed is conducting the test. This registration information is encrypted and transferred in the query string of a URL that links from the AllHealth login page to a WellMed server.

Once on the health assessment test page, if the user clicks on the "privacy policy" link, he or she is taken to the WellMed privacy policy, not to the AllHealth privacy policy. This switching of sites and privacy policies may be difficult for users to follow. Here are the locations of the two privacy policies:

- AllHealth home page—
<http://www.ivillage.com/help/privacy.html>
- AllHealth/WellMed health assessment test—
<https://allhealth.wellmed.com/allhealth/main/privacy.asp>

Intelihealth offers the same WellMed health assessment test, but it was not possible to determine if user data was being provided to WellMed, because all form data was sent back to Intelihealth and not to WellMed.

CVS.com uses the services of the CPM Marketing Group to conduct its health assessment tests. CVS.com makes the claim that it owns all of the data provided by the user during the test, but it fails to disclose that CPM is running the test and that all information is sent to CPM. Yahoo also offers a health assessment test, which is run by HealthCentral. Again, this relationship is not disclosed and there is no mention by Yahoo of whether HealthCentral has the right also to use data supplied during the test.

Poor web design sends user data to third parties

Another way health Web sites disclose the personally identifiable data of users is through poor design of HTML forms.

The two most common methods of submitting data in an HTML form to a Web server are the GET method and the POST method. The GET method is typically used when the amount of form data is very small, such as a search string (the words entered when searching using a search engine). The GET method includes the form data in the submitted URL and can potentially leak information to other Web sites.

The POST method is generally more appropriate for forms carrying data such as registration information, as it is a more secure method for submitting data.

Use of the less secure GET method by several health Web sites reviewed in this investigation indicates that personally identifiable, or potentially personally identifiable, data is being accidentally transferred to other Web sites in the referring URLs. The Web sites where such data transfer occurs are:

- On Intellihealth's diabetes diary page, a user's e-mail address will be sent to both a banner ad network company and an advertiser if the banner ad is clicked.
- At WebMD's health records page, clicking on a banner ad to Microsoft will send the user's WebMD customer ID to Microsoft.
- At the HealthCentral site, the Web forms used for site registration, health surveys, and newsletter subscription send a great deal of personally identifiable user information to DoubleClick. The information is sent to DoubleClick servers when a banner ad is viewed on the page that appears directly after a Web form is submitted to HealthCentral.

The companies identified above have been notified of the potential security problems prior to the release of this report.

Security of Customer Databases

While the scope of this investigation did not include an examination of the security systems at the health Web sites, during the course of the investigation a number of security holes were observed at a few of the sites. These potential security breaches allow unauthorized individuals (i.e., "hackers") to access individual accounts, health information, or entire databases.

The potential security breaches identified were:

- At the WellMed site, “debug” code was accidentally left on, displaying complete login information, including the password to a health records database. This login information is visible to anyone viewing the HTML source code of the site’s Web pages. Enough information on the Web page appears for someone to break in and download the entire database.
- At the same site, a single health record can be viewed by entering a user’s account number, found in the URL. No login name or password protects the data. Because account numbers are encoded in URLs, someone with access to a person’s computer can view his or her health records simply by looking in the history list of the browser. No password is required. However, it does not appear that if someone knows one account number he or she can guess at other account numbers and access other accounts.
- At the www.hraonline.com site, which maintains personal health information, we identified a similar problem. However, at this site it appears it might be possible to deduce other account numbers from a starting account number, allowing someone to break into many accounts.

The companies identified above have been notified of the potential security problems prior to the release of this report. Most of the security problems found were related to health assessment tests and online health records, where one site does the logon and another site conducts the actual tests or holds the health records. The sharing of functions between companies appears to have created gaps in security.

Security problems at a Web site directly affect its ability to ensure the privacy of its users. Without an exhaustive and comprehensive security review of health Web sites, it is unclear what the scope of true security problems may be.

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1. <http://www.drkoop.com/aboutus/policies/privacy.html>
 2. http://www.drkoop.com/aboutus/policies/online_service.html
 3. <http://www.mediconsult.com/mc/mcsite.nsf/conditionnav/policyandpractices>
 4. Information about this committee is available at the FTC website:
<http://www.ftc.gov/acoas/index.htm>.
 5. http://www.excite.com/privacy_policy/
 6. <http://techdeals.findlaw.com/agreements/drkoop/dartservagree.html>
 7. http://www.doubleclick.com/privacy_policy/
 8. <http://onhealth.com/ch1/info/item,3678.asp>
 9. <http://member.onhealth.com/ch1/interactives/hra/shell.htm>

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Based on the findings of this report and the most recent survey data of consumer attitudes about the ethical conduct of health Web sites, one thing is clear: There is much work needed to provide consumers with an acceptable level of trust and confidence in the privacy safeguards and practices of health Web sites. At best, the privacy policies of health Web sites are confusing, inconsistent, weak, and often misleading when measured against the sites' actual practices. A site with a privacy policy that disclaims liability for the actions of third parties on the site in effect negates the privacy policy.

For starters, this report recommends that organizations and companies that manage health Web sites take the following steps:

1. Perform a thorough evaluation of your site's privacy policy.

The policy should strive to include all elements of fair information practice principles. It should be conspicuous and user-friendly. And it should disclose all that is taking place. Health Web sites should provide users with better notice of information practices, for instance, by alerting users to information practices before they give information, when they leave sites to link to other sites, and when they give information to a partner. No information should be collected by sites without the user's knowledge, such as through the use of cookies or banner ads.

2. Close the loop between privacy policy and practice.

Measure your site's privacy policy against the information practices at your site. Do the information practices differ as users perform various activities on the site? Know the information practices of third-party advertisers and business partners. If their activities are inconsistent with your privacy policy, either alert users or consider instituting a "chain of trust" so that the privacy protections follow the user's data. Health Web sites should hold business partners, contractors, and others to the site owner's policies.

3. Aim to provide users with anonymity.

Many health sites purport to share only “anonymous” or aggregate data with business partners and third parties. The intent is to protect the confidentiality of user information, for while the use and disclosure of anonymized information may be objectionable to some, it does not in and of itself violate individual privacy. It is not always easy to determine whether information is identifiable or anonymous. Information may be anonymous to the Web site owner, but business partners, third-party ad networks, and others may be able to combine the anonymous information with information collected elsewhere to create an identifiable profile on users. Health Web sites that want to promise confidentiality to users will have to make a determination about whether the information disclosed might be vulnerable to such manipulation.

4. Develop a model privacy policy in cooperation with other Internet health leaders.

Clearly, these efforts will require a commitment by Internet health leaders to the principle that core medical confidentiality ethics should migrate to online activities. The recent formation of the Hi-Ethics group and the convening of an eHealth Ethics Summit by the Internet Healthcare Coalition are encouraging signs. Each is focused on the adoption of principles and standards and on the establishment of a common set of rules for health Web sites to follow. The e-health community must act quickly in this regard. The time to do the right thing is now.

The public has expressed its desire for the online health world to adopt strong, workable privacy policies and practices, and has also expressed that the lack of fair information practices is a significant barrier to people seeking and sharing information and engaging in online health commerce.

Financial pressures often underlie the increase in the collection and sharing of personal information online, but there is more than ample evidence that the public expects—and indeed deserves—privacy to be a more fundamental principle in the operation of health Web sites. This must be the case if we are to realize the potential and promise the Internet offers to improve the quality of clinical care and the health of millions of Americans.

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Richard M. Smith

The **Health Privacy Project** is a part of the Institute for Health Care Research and Policy at the Georgetown University Medical Center. The Health Privacy Project is dedicated to raising public awareness of the importance of ensuring health privacy in order to improve health care access and quality, both on an individual and a community level. The Project receives funding primarily from the California HealthCare Foundation, the Open Society Institute's Program on Medicine as a Profession, the Kellogg Foundation, and the Trellis Fund. For more information, please visit www.healthprivacy.org.

Richard M. Smith is an independent Internet security consultant based in Brookline, Massachusetts. Prior to being a consultant, he was President of Phar Lap Software, a position he held for more than 13 years. Phar Lap produces real-time operating system and embedded development tools. For the past two years, Richard has been researching privacy and security issues on the Internet. Some of the areas that he has looked into include: the use of serial numbers in Windows and application software for tracking purposes; Web browser and e-mail reader security holes; how companies monitor people and e-mail using techniques such as Web Bugs and click-through monitoring links; and how Web sites exchange private data using simple Web protocols. For more information, please visit www.tiac.net/users/smiths.

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ABOUT THE WEB SITES

For-profit or not-for-profit	For-profit . . .16 Non-profit . . .5
Sells products or services	Yes16 No5
Advertisements	Yes15 No6
Third-party ad networks	Yes11 No10
Uses cookies	Yes18 No3
Privacy policy	Yes19 No2

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INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

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Free materials	6
Health assessment	14
Medical consultation	15
Medical history/record	6
Product sales	15
Registration	16
Search strings	21
Surveys/polls	13

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Web sites
Who is collecting information	Yes: 17	Altavista.com; Cansearch.com; Cvs.com; Drkoop.com; Drugstore.com; Excite.com; Healthcentral.com; Intelihealth.com; Mayohealth.org; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com; Mhnet.org; Mothernature.com; Oncolink.com; Planetrx.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	No: 2	iVillage.com; Onhealth.com
	Maybe: 0	
	N/A: 2	Hivinsite.ucsf.edu; Thebody.com
What information is collected	Yes: 18	Altavista.com; Cansearch.com; Cvs.com, Drkoop.com; Drugstore.com; Excite.com; Healthcentral.com; Intelihealth.com; Ivillage.com; Mayohealth.org; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com; Mhnet.org; Mothernature.com; Oncolink.com; Planetrx.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	No: 0	
	Maybe: 1	Onhealth.com
	N/A: 2	Hivinsite.ucsf.edu; Thebody.com
When and how information is collected	Yes: 18	Altavista.com; Cansearch.com; ; Cvs.com, Drkoop.com; Drugstore.com; Excite.com; Healthcentral.com; Intelihealth.com; Ivillage.com; Mayohealth.org; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com; Mhnet.org; Mothernature.com; Oncolink.com; Planetrx.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	No: 1	
	Maybe: 0	Onhealth.com
	N/A: 2	Thebody.com; Hivinsite.ucsf.edu
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes: 15	Altavista.com; Cansearch.com; Cvs.com, Drkoop.com; Excite.com; Healthcentral.com; Intelihealth.com; Ivillage.com; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com; Mothernature.com; Oncolink.com; Planetrx.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	No: 1	Mhnet.org
	Maybe: 3	Drugstore.com; Mayohealth.org; Onhealth.com
	N/A: 2	Thebody.com; Hivinsite.ucsf.edu
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes: 16	Altavista.com; Cansearch.com; Cvs.com, Drugstore.com; Excite.com; Healthcentral.com; Intelihealth.com; Ivillage.com; Mayohealth.org; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com; Mothernature.com; Oncolink.com; Planetrx.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	No: 3	Drkoop.com; Mhnet.org; Onhealth.com
	Maybe: 0	
	N/A: 2	Thebody.com; Hivinsite.ucsf.edu

Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Web sites
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	Yes: 8	Cvs.com, Drugstore.com; Excite.com; Medscape.com; Mothernature.com; Planetrx.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	No: 10	Altavista.com; Cansearch.com; Drkoop.com; Healthcentral.com; Intellihealth.com; ayohealth.org; Mediconsult.com; Mhnet.org; Oncolink.com; Onhealth.com
	Maybe: 1	iVillage.com
	N/A: 2	Thebody.com; Hivinsite.ucsf.edu
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	Yes: 10	Altavista.com; Cvs.com, Drugstore.com; Excite.com; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com; Mothernature.com; Planetrx.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	No: 9	Cansearch.com; Drkoop.com; Healthcentral.com; Intellihealth.com; Ivillage.com; Mayohealth.org; Mhnet.org; Oncolink.com; Onhealth.com
	Maybe: 0	
	N/A: 2	Thebody.com; Hivinsite.ucsf.edu
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes: 16	Cansearch.com; Cvs.com, Drkoop.com; Drugstore.com; Excite.com; Healthcentral.com; Intellihealth.com; Ivillage.com; Mayohealth.org; Mhnet.org; Mothernature.com; Oncolink.com; Onhealth.com; Planetrx.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	No: 0	
	Maybe: 3	Altavista.com; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com
	N/A: 2	Hivinsite.ucsf.edu; Thebody.com
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Yes: 5	Cvs.com, Drkoop.com; Excite.com; Onhealth.com; Planetrx.com
	No: 3	iVillage.com; Oncolink.com; Mhnet.org
	Maybe: 12	Altavista.com; Cansearch.com; Drugstore.com; Healthcentral.com; Intellihealth.com; Mayohealth.org; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com; Mhnet.org; Mothernature.com;; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	N/A: 2	Hivinsite.ucsf.edu; Thebody.com
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Yes: 11	Cansearch.com; Cvs.com, Drkoop.com; Excite.com; Ivillage.com; Mayohealth.org; Medscape.com; Mhnet.org; Onhealth.com; Planetrx.com; Webmd.com
	No: 3	Altavista.com; Healthcentral.com; Oncolink.com
	Maybe: 5	Drugstore.com; Intellihealth.com; Mediconsult.com; Mothernature.com; Yahoo.com
	N/A: 2	Hivinsite.ucsf.edu; Thebody.com
Request to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes: 15	Cansearch.com; Cvs.com; Drkoop.com; Drugstore.com; Healthcentral.com; Mayohealth.org; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com; Mothernature.com; Oncolink.com; Onhealth.com; Mhnet.org; Planetrx.com; Yahoo.com
	No: 3	Altavista.com; Excite.com.com; Ivillage.com.com; Webmd.com.com
	Maybe: 1	Intelihealth.com
	N/A: 2	Hivinsite.ucsf.edu; Thebody.com

(continued)

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Web sites
Specific security measures explained	Yes: 11	Altavista.com; Cvs.com, Drkoop.com; ; Drugstore.com; Mediconsult.com; Mothernature.com; Oncolink.com; Onhealth.com; Planetrx.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	No: 6	Cansearch.com; Excite.com; Healthcentral.com; Mayohealth.org; Medscape.com; Mhnet.org
	Maybe: 2	Intelihealth.com; Ivillage.com
	N/A: 2	Hivinsite.ucsf.edu; Thebody.com
Different security measures for sensitive information	Yes: 6	Drugstore.com; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com; Oncolink.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	No: 13	Altavista.com; Cansearch.com; Cvs.com, Drkoop.com; Excite.com; Healthcentral.com; Intelihealth.com; Ivillage.com; Mayohealth.org; Mhnet.org; Mothernature.com; Onhealth.com; Planetrx.com
	Maybe: 0	
	N/A: 2	Hivinsite.ucsf.edu; Thebody.com

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Web sites
Business partners	Yes: 1	Oncolink.com
	No: 14	Altavista.com; Cvs.com, Drugstore.com; Excite.com; Healthcentral.com; Intelihealth.com; Ivillage.com; Mayohealth.org; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com;; Mothernature.com; Onhealth.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	Maybe: 0	
	N/A: 6	Cansearch.com; Drkoop.com; Hivinsite.ucsf.edu; Mhnet.org; Planetrx.com; Thebody.com
Banner advertisers and third party ad networks	Yes: 1	Oncolink.com
	No: 13	Altavista.com; Drkoop.com; Excite.com; Healthcentral.com; Intelihealth.com; Ivillage.com; Mayohealth.org; Mediconsult.com; Medscape.com; Mhnet.org; Onhealth.com; Webmd.com; Yahoo.com
	Maybe: 0	
	N/A: 6	Cansearch.com; Cvs.com, Drugstore.com; Hivinsite.ucsf.edu; Mothernature.com;; Planetrx.com; ; Thebody.com
Other third parties	Yes: 0	
	No: 6	Altavista.com; Excite.com; Healthcentral.com; Intelihealth.com;; Mayohealth.org;;; Webmd.com
	Maybe: 0	
	N/A: 15	Cansearch.com; Cvs.com, Drkoop.com; Drugstore.com; Hivinsite.ucsf.edu; Ivillage.com Mediconsult.com Medscape.com; Mhnet.org; Mothernature.com; Oncolink.com; Onhealth.com Planetrx.com Thebody.com; Yahoo.com

SITE OWNER: ALTAVISTA COMPANY

- For-profit
- ✓ Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
- ✓ Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy*



ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
- ✓ Displayed on additional pages
- Endorsed by:
- ✓ TRUSTE
HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/22/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS



- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
E-mail article to colleague/friend
Free materials
Health assessment
Medical consultation
Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	"Third party companies also may collect information about you when you view or click an advertisement at our site." "Whenever you provide registration information on co-branded sites, that data may be shared with our media partners. You should make every effort to read these privacy policies, and make an informed decision on your own whether or not to continue based upon these sites' privacy practices and your own discretion."		
What information is collected	Yes	The policy notifies users that personally identifiable information will be collected in connection with a number of activities. The site also collects the user's IP address.		The policy does not make clear that search strings are passed to the third-party ad networks
When and how information is collected	Yes	Information can be collected when users register, use the site, choose to participate in contests, view or click on an advertisement.		
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes			
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	"[W]e may collect additional demographic and profile data. We use this data to personalize your experience at our site, showing you content that we think you will be interested in, and displaying the content according to your preferences."		The third-party ad network (DoubleClick) also profiles users, even though they claim in their own privacy policy that do not do profiling of medical issues. On this site, there is a high degree of correlation between health-related search strings and the banner ads that subsequently appear.

Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	No			


Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Maybe	<p>A user may opt-out of disclosures to third parties that generate "closely matched" advertisements.</p> <p>A user can opt-in to share information with sponsors and partners.</p> <p>However, the site also states "we can and will use IP addresses to identify users of our site when we feel it is necessary to enforce compliance with our site's terms of use or terms of service, or to protect our service, site, or other users."</p>		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Maybe	"We pledge that we will not use information about you without your permission."		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	No	<p>"Whenever you provide registration information on co-branded sites, that data may be shared with our media partners. You should make every effort to read these privacy policies, and make an informed decision on your own whether or not to continue based upon these sites' privacy practices and your own discretion. However, we will make every effort to ensure that you have the ability to opt out of the sharing of such data with our media partners."</p>		<p>Much of the content for AltaVista Health is provided on a co-branded site with HealthCentral.com. Users are sent off the AltaVista page to HealthCentral.com for many services. HealthCentral's privacy policy and practices are not rigorous enough (see www.healthcentral.com).</p>
Request to limit disclosures to third parties	No	<p>"AltaVista uses one or more third party companies to serve advertisements at our site. These companies may use cookies to ensure that you do not see the same advertisements too often, but they also may collect information about you when you view or click an advertisement at our site..."</p>		<p>The user has no right to limit disclosures, including search strings, to the third-party ad network.</p>


Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes	The site explains the following security measures: "industry standard firewall," password protection, "strict rules" for employees, employee passwords, and non-disclosure agreements.		

Different security measures for sensitive information	No			
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Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	<p>"Whenever you provide registration information on co-branded sites, that data may be shared with our media partners. You should...make an informed decision on your own whether or not to continue based upon these sites' privacy practices and your own discretion. No third-party sites are covered by this Privacy Policy."</p>		<p>Much of the content for AltaVista Health is provided on a co-branded site with HealthCentral.com. Users are sent off the AltaVista page to HealthCentral.com for many services.</p>

Banner advertisers and third party ad networks	No	<p>"AltaVista does not have access to [information collected by third party companies], nor can we control how they are used."</p>		
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(continued)

Other third parties

No

"In addition to finding co-branded sites, you will find direct links on our site to sites offered by third parties. Some of these sites are authorized to use the AltaVista brand and/or logo. AltaVista carefully evaluates all parties that are authorized to use its brand and/or logo, and believes that all such sites have adopted acceptable privacy policies"



SITE OWNER: NATIONAL COALITION FOR CANCER SURVIVORSHIP

Not-for-profit

- ✓ Sells products or services
 - Advertisements
 - Third-party ad networks
 - Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy*

ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
- ✓ Displayed on additional pages

Endorsed by:




TRUSTe
HON

Date policy downloaded:1/21/00


INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- Drug interactions
- Electronic newsletter
- E-mail article to colleague/friend
- ✓ Free materials
- Health assessment
- Medical consultation
- Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration*
- ✓ Search strings
- Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	"We [NCCS] collect and store your name, mailing address, and credit card information for processing publication or merchandise online orders that you request." The policy makes no mention of others collecting information.		Outside companies directly collect order information, including names, mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, credit card information, and some health information for processing merchandise orders.
What information is collected	Yes	"If you visit our site to place an order: We collect and store your name, mailing address, and credit card information for processing publication or merchandise online orders that you request."		Online order forms also request information regarding cancer diagnosis, which user may provide voluntarily.
When and how information is collected	Yes	See above.		
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes	"NCCS also does not share names, mailing addresses, email addresses, or credit card information of Internet site users with any other organization or company."		Order information goes directly from user to an outside company for processing.
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	The policy states that they do not profile users.		

Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	Users may opt-in to uses by requesting informational materials or making a purchase.		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Maybe	"NCCS also does not share names, mailing addresses, email addresses, or credit card information of Internet site users with any other organization or company."		See above. The user is not able to limit disclosure to agents and suppliers.

(continued)

Right to limit disclosures to business partners Yes

Request to limit disclosures to third parties Yes

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	No			
Different security measures for sensitive information	No			

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	N/A	The policy states NCCS does not share personally identifiable information "with any other organization or company."		
Banner advertisers and third party ad networks	N/A			
Other third parties	N/A	See above.		

* There is not a registration option for the site, but people can become a member of the organization by making a donation.

SITE OWNER: CVS.COM

For-profit

- ✓ Sells products or services
 - Advertisements
 - Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy



ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
 - ✓ Displayed on additional pages
- Endorsed by:
- ✓ TRUSTe HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/20/00


INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- ✓ Drug interactions
- Electronic newsletter
- E-mail article to colleague/friend
- Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- Medical consultation
- ✓ Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- Surveys/polls


Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	"CVS.com is the sole collector and owner of this information."		CPM Marketing Group also collects user health information through the Interactive Health Risk Assessment. (URL changes from CVS.com to hraonline.com, a site owned by CPM Marketing Group). A separate consent form that must be agreed to before participating in the survey states only that: "CVS.com is the sole owner of this information."
What information is collected	Yes	The policy states that they collect contact, health, and billing information, as well as site traffic and usage patterns.		
When and how information is collected	Yes			
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes	"Your contact, health and billing information enables us to deliver the best health, wellness and prescription products to you. Trusting us with your medical history allows our pharmacists to watch for potentially dangerous interactions in medicines you order at CVS.com. Your good health is important to us. In support of our mission, we bring you special promotional offers including contests and timely health information. We are constantly working to bring you greater personalization choices and to find ways to help improve your health. Your sharing information with us allows us to tailor new features to your health concerns and interests. Thank you for trusting us to provide you with these pharmacy services and features."		The policy does not state how CPM Marketing Group will use the information it collects at hraonline.com
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	"Your sharing information with us allows us to tailor new features to your health concerns and interests."		

Users Access and Control


Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	Yes	"You can update any of the information you've given us anytime by visiting Your Account."		
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	Yes	See above.		
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	"We hope you'll agree to let us contact you with timely promotional offers and health information. You can take yourself off our mailing list anytime by visiting your Account Registration and clicking 'no' to the question about receiving promotional emails."		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Yes	"Teaming up with our parent company allows us to offer more choices for getting prescriptions filled. For customers that live in states with CVS/pharmacy stores, you can ask us to pass your order and health information along so you can pick your prescription up at a store location near you. Rest assured, your information will be shared only if you choose to 'pick-up' your new prescription or you use our time-saving Express Refills service."		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Yes	"We may share non-personal, summary or aggregate data with partners and other third-parties."		The link to the Interactive Health Risk Assessment takes the user off CVS.com to hraonline.com with no notice. The user is unable to limit disclosure of this information to CPM Marketing Group.
Request to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	"We will not give, sell, rent, or loan any identifiable personal information to any third party, unless legally required to do so."		

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes	"Your encrypted (encoded) information is protected using 'Secure Socket Layers (SSL)' as it passes between your browser and the CVS.com servers. Our team of technology experts works around the clock to protect your information from unauthorized third parties."		
Different security measures for sensitive information	No			Results of individual Interactive Health Risk Assessment are not password protected making it possible to read results on any computer without a password.

(continued)

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	<p>"We may team up with third parties to bring you special offers including giveaways, interactive tools and product promotions. Personally-identifiable information may be needed to participate in such offerings. We will always tell you up-front how your information will be used by us and our partners before you give it to us." There is no mention of those partners' privacy policies.</p>		<p>There is no information on CPM Marketing Group's privacy policies.</p>
Banner advertisers and third party ad networks	N/A	<p>This site does not have banner ads.</p>		
Other third parties	N/A	<p>The policy states that they do not disclose to third-parties.</p>		

SITE OWNER: DRKOOP.COM

For-profit

- ✓ Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
- ✓ Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy





ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
 - ✓ Displayed on additional pages
- Endorsed by:
- TRUSTe
 - ✓ HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/19/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- ✓ Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- ✓ E-mail article to colleague/friend
- ✓ Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
- Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	The policy implies that the only party gathering information is drkoop.com		User information, including health information, is collected by a third-party ad network (DoubleClick).
What information is collected	Yes	"The only information drkoop.com obtains about individual visitors to its Web site is information supplied voluntarily by visitors."		The privacy policy does not reveal that information from cookies will be linked to information supplied voluntarily. From the Online Users Agreement: "The cookie itself does not contain Locator Information although it will enable drkoop.com to relate your use of the site to information that you have specifically and knowingly provided to the site."
When and how information is collected	Yes	"In cases when drkoop.com may need personal information to provide visitors with services tailored especially for them, or to inform them about new features or services, visitors are asked explicitly for that information."		The policy does not state when and how site usage information is gathered, nor does it state when information is gathered by third-party ad networks.
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes	See above.		The policy does not discuss how profiling information will be used or how third-party ad networks will use information.
Whether visitors will be profiled	No			According to Online Service Agreement, users will be profiled.

Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	"All identifiable information provided by members (name, email or home address) will not be disclosed to anyone unless		

members specifically request drkoop.com to do so."

"In cases when drkoop.com may need personal information to provide visitors with services tailored especially for them, or to inform them about new features or services, visitors are asked explicitly for that information."

Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Yes	"All identifiable information provided by members (name, email or home address) will not be disclosed to anyone unless members specifically request drkoop.com to do so."
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Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Yes	"Only statistical information of our members as a group (usage habits, demographics) may be shared with any partner of drkoop.com; no identifiable information will be shared at any time."
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"All identifiable information provided by members (name, email or home address) will not be disclosed to anyone unless members specifically request drkoop.com to do so."

Request to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	"Only statistical information of our members as a group (usage habits, demographics) may be shared with any partner of drkoop.com; no identifiable information will be shared at any time."
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The user does not have a right to limit disclosures of individual information to third-party ad networks.

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes	"[P]ersonal information is stored in a secured database and always sent via an encrypted Internet channel."		
Different security measures for sensitive information	No			

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	N/A	The policy states that business partners only receive "statistical" information.		
Banner advertisers and third party ad networks	No	The policy states that "no information will be shared" but does not indicate whether information that is collected by any other parties is held to the same standards.		Third-party ad networks are collecting information.
Other third parties	N/A			

SITE OWNER: DRUGSTORE.COM

For-profit

- ✓ Sells products or services
 - Advertisements
 - Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy

ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
 - ✓ Displayed on additional pages
- Endorsed by:
- ✓ TRUSTe
HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/20/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- ✓ Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- E-mail article to colleague/friend
- Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
- ✓ Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	"We at drugstore.com recognize your right to confidentiality and are committed to protecting your privacy. We use the information that we collect..."		
What information is collected	Yes	The policy specifically states that insurance information and social security number may be requested in connection with prescription orders.		
When and how information is collected	Yes			
How the information will be used and disclosed	Maybe	The policy fully explains disclosure of information to other parties, but does not fully explain how drugstore.com will use the information, stating only that "[w]e use the information that we collect on our site to provide you with a superior shopping experience."		
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	"We use the information that we collect on our site to provide you with a superior shopping experience" implies profiling.		There are numerous surveys on the site with health-related questions; it is unclear if that information is linked to user account information.

Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	Yes	"If you would like to review or revise the information we have in your account, you may access such information by clicking on the 'your account' tab on any screen."		
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	Yes	See above.		
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	When ordering products, users are asked if they would like to receive e-mail about new products.		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Maybe	"We will not give, sell, rent, or loan any identifiable personal information to any third party, unless legally required to do so." It is not clear who is included in the definition of third party.		

Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Maybe	<p>It appears that identifiable information is not shared with partners except in the fulfillment of prescriptions and the use of the GNC Gold Card:</p> <p>"We may share non-personal, summary, or aggregate customer data with partners and other third parties."</p> <p>"We will not release any prescription information in connection with any patient identification other than to the patient, our fulfillment partners, the patient's authorized representative, or the prescribing or authorized practitioner caring for the patient."</p> <p>"Because we sell and accept GNC Gold Cards on behalf of GNC, when you purchase a GNC Gold Card from drugstore.com, we share your name, address, phone number, gender, and birth month and year with GNC. At your direction, we also share your e-mail address. When you use your GNC Gold Card to purchase GNC products at drugstore.com, we share with GNC a list of the products you purchased in the GNC Live Well store. We do not share with GNC information about products that you purchase outside of the GNC Live Well store."</p>
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Request to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	"We will not give, sell, rent, or loan any identifiable personal information to any third party, unless legally required to do so."
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Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes			
Different security measures for sensitive information	Yes	"Your credit card information is always stored in encrypted form in a database that is away from our Web site database so it isn't connected to the Internet, and is therefore safe from hackers."		

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	The policy does not state what privacy policies prescription fulfillment partners are bound to; only that: "Our pharmacists work with our partners to ensure the accurate and confidential fulfillment of your prescriptions."		
Banner advertisers and third party ad networks	N/A	The site does not have advertisements.		
Other third parties	No	The policy states that information will not be disclosed to third parties.		

SITE OWNER: AT HOME CORPORATION

For-profit

- ✓ Sells products or services*
- ✓ Advertisements
- ✓ Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy

ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
- ✓ Displayed on additional pages

Endorsed by:



- ✓ TRUSTe
HON

Date policy downloaded:1/19/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- ✓ E-mail article to colleague/friend*
Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls**

Notice to User


Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	<p>"The data you provide in any Internet domain of the Excite@Home Network, including http://www.excite.com, is collected by the At Home Corporation. Excite@Home is a wholly owned - subsidiary of this corporation."</p> <p>"Other companies that place advertising on our site may collect information about you when you view or click on their advertising or content through the use of cookies."</p>		<p>The policy does not explicitly disclose that WebMD, which co-hosts the Excite health page (www.health.excite.com), also collects extensive personal and health information. At www.health.excite.com, the privacy policy that the user clicks on switches to the WebMD privacy policy (see www.webmd.com) with no notice to the user. However, the site still has an excite.com URL, so it is unclear if just one or both of the companies are collecting the information, nor is it clear if just the WebMD policy is binding at this point or if Excite's policy is also in place.</p> <p>The policy also does not disclose that one of the "companies that place advertising on Excite" is Matchlogic, a subsidiary of Excite, Inc., which merged with At Home Corporation in 1999.</p>
What information is collected	Yes	<p>"[W]e may at times ask you to submit information such as your name or email address, or to share your interests and hobbies with us."</p> <p>If the user is a broadband cable service customer (a paid service), name, address, phone number, and potentially credit card information is obtained. Automatically transmitted information includes the URL of the Web page the user was just on (known as the "Refer"), the IP (or Internet Protocol) address of the computer the user was using, or the browser version used to access the site.</p> <p>"Every Web page that you access that includes advertising or content served from the Excite@Home Network will have the contents of your cookie reported in our server logs."</p>		<p>The policy does not mention that health information is collected.</p>
When and how information is collected	Yes	<p>See above. Additionally, information is obtained when a visitor registers</p>		

with Excite, uses "My Excite Start Page," or Excite Mail e-mail, among other Excite personal services. The policy also explains the use of cookies by advertisers.

How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes	<p>The policy identifies more than twelve uses and disclosures.</p> <p>The policy also states "The Excite@Home Network does not actively associate the message content entered by our customers in Excite Mail, Excite Message Boards, or Excite Chat products with those customers' registration information. Our server computers will retain this information, however; and it is potentially available for distribution to third parties...We do not use this information to target any advertising to our customers, nor is it ever willingly distributed to any third party...except if subpoenaed."</p>
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Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	<p>"At no time is your personally identifiable information used to determine what type of advertising you receive..."</p> <p>The policy notifies users that information will be used to "provide personalized content;" to determine what "customers do and do not use on our service and modify our content appropriately," and to "match the patterns of usage that our consumers exhibit on any Web site where we serve advertising... to create 'imputed profiles' to statistically model the demographic characteristics of an otherwise anonymous customer...to target advertising."</p>
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Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	Yes	Users have the ability to view and edit the personal information submitted to Excite. Additionally, users may deactivate, but not delete, their account.		
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	Yes	See above.		
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	<p>Registered users may opt out of e-mail communications from Excite@Home.</p> <p>Users may opt-in to have information shared with partners for special promotions.</p>		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	No	Information collected at any Internet domain of the Excite@Home Network, including http://www.excite.com , is shared with the At Home Corporation.		The user does not have a right to limit disclosures of advertising-related cookie information to Matchlogic. Medical conditions of interest are passed from Excite to Matchlogic in banner ad URLs when the user clicks on an ad.
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Yes	"At times, the Excite@Home Network may enter into cobranding arrangements with other companies, and if so, an opt-		

in question may be present for contact from these firms as well. Their opt-out features are specific to each organization, but you should never receive email from these organizations unless you have indicated that it is acceptable. All email from the Excite@Home Network, or from cobrand partners who gain your permission to send you commercial email, will include an opportunity to opt out of future communications."

Request to limit disclosures to third parties

No

"If you do choose to share Personally Identifiable Information with Excite@Home, you can control whether we contact you or share the information with third parties, either through declarations you make at the time you share information with us, or through updates to your information in the Excite@Home Member Services area."



The user does not have a right to limit disclosure to third-party ad networks.

"Other companies that place advertising on our site may collect information about you when you view or click on their advertising or content through the use of cookies."

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes	"The Excite@Home Network operates secure data networks protected by industry standard firewall and password protection systems. Our security and privacy policies are periodically reviewed and enhanced as necessary, and only authorized individuals have access to the information provided by our customers."		
Different security measures for sensitive information	Yes	"Even your registration account password is encrypted before it is sent to our computers ...Any other particularly sensitive information, such as a customer's credit card number... is also encrypted prior to transmission."		

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	"We do, however, encourage our co-branding partners to adopt privacy policies similar to this one and to become licensees of TRUSTe, and we have been relatively successful to date in gaining coverts [sic]. "		
Banner advertisers and third party ad networks	No	Excite@Home does not legally bind advertisers; however, "Excite@Home is leading the creation of industry standards of acceptable practice for what is known as 'Third party ad serving,' and once these standards are established will only accept advertising from third party firms that adhere to those rules of conduct."		

Other third parties

No

The policy indicates that they will share information with third parties under some circumstances, but does not indicate if they are bound to the privacy policy.

SITE OWNER: HEALTHCENTRAL.COM

- For-profit
 - Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
- ✓ Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy





ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- Displayed on homepage
- Displayed on additional pages
- Endorsed by:
 - TRUSTe
- ✓ HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/26/00


INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
 - Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
 - E-mail article to colleague/friend
 - Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
 - Medical history/record
 - Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	The policy is part of a Terms of Use Agreement between HealthCentral.com and the user.		The policy does not state that a third-party ad network is collecting information.
What information is collected	Yes	The policy refers to a variety of "information which may personally identify you."		The policy does not mention that personal health information is gathered through a variety of mechanisms and can be linked to personally-identifying information.
When and how information is collected	Yes	"Information which may personally identify you such as your name and street address may be gathered, processed or used in the following instances." One of those instances is "if you use HealthCentral.com to purchase or otherwise obtain digital delivery of or access to specific content, goods or services specifically delivered or made accessible to you by means of electronic transmission during a HealthCentral.com session, the company providing such content, goods or services - the 'Content Provider' - may obtain Information." As a content provider, it appears that HealthCentral.com can "obtain" the information on anyone who accesses any feature of the site.		If accessed directly, the site's "health profiles" provide users with the option of saving or deleting their answers; however, if those same profiles are accessed through "Cool Tools," there is no such option, raising the question of whether or not the information is saved or deleted. Also, the policy does not state that information, including information related to health conditions, is also gathered by a third-party ad network.
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes	"You also agree that we may use information you submit to operate this Service and web site, or as required by law." "HealthCentral.com and your [Internet Access Provider] may use Information as is necessary for enforcement of any of the terms of this Agreement."		The policy does not address how they collect personal health information. The policy does not state how third-party ad networks will use personal and health information.
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	"The cookie itself does not contain Information which would personally identify you, although it will enable HealthCentral.com to relate your use of the site to information that you have specifically and knowingly provided to the site."		


Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	"With your prior consent HealthCentral.com may use your e-mail address to forward special offers or communications from selected companies to you via HealthCentral.com."		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Maybe	"We respect your personal privacy. We will never release your name, street address, or telephone number without your consent except as noted in paragraphs 4 and 5."		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	No	"If you use HealthCentral.com to purchase or otherwise obtain digital delivery of or access to specific content, goods or services specifically delivered or made accessible to you by means of electronic transmission during a HealthCentral.com session, the company providing such content, goods or services - the 'Content Provider' - may obtain Information"		
Request to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	See above.		The user has no right to limit disclosures to third-party ad networks. HealthCentral.com passes off members e-mail addresses, personal data, health survey responses, and user interest in specific health conditions to DoubleClick through referring URLs.

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	No			
Different security measures for sensitive information	No			

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	The policy does not address.		
Banner advertisers and third party ad networks	No	The policy does not address.		
Other third parties	No	The policy does not address.		

**SITE OWNER: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SAN FRANCISCO AIDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE**
Not-For-profit
Sells products or services
Advertisements
Third-party ad networks
Uses cookies
Privacy policy*






ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

N/A Displayed on homepage
N/A Displayed on additional pages
Endorsed by:
TRUSTe
HON
Date policy downloaded: N/A

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- ✓ Drug interactions/searches**
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- E-mail article to colleague/friend
- Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
- Medical history/record
- Product sales
- Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	N/A			This site has no privacy policy. UCSF appears to collect all information.
What information is collected	N/A			This site has no privacy policy. The site collects e-mail addresses, demographics, and personal health information.
When and how information is collected	N/A			This site has no privacy policy. Users provide information for an e-mail newsletter list, questions to experts, and a clinical trials assessment.
How the information will be used and disclosed	N/A			This site has no privacy policy. Confidentiality statements indicate that no information will be disclosed.
Whether visitors will be profiled	N/A			This site has no privacy policy. The site does not appear to use cookies.

Users Access and Control***

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	N/A			
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	N/A			
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	N/A			Users can unsubscribe to electronic newsletter.
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	N/A	Several locations at the site allow users to submit an e-mail address, and a personal clinical trials search engine requires submission of medical history. At one of the locations to submit an e-mail address, it states, "Please		The website does maintain its own e-mail list.

be assured that your email address and subscription [sic] will be kept in the stricted [sic] confidence. We will not share the subscription list with anyone."

At the trials location there is a statement that says, "We do not save any identifying information about the searches done here; they are completely anonymous.

While there is no explicit right to limit disclosures, it appears that the site does not disclose any of the information to anyone, thus allowing users to participate without having their information disclosed. The statement, "We will not share the subscription list with anyone," implies that the e-mail list will only be held by UCSF staff.

Right to limit disclosures to business partners	N/A	See above.
Right to limit disclosures to third parties	N/A	See above.

Security***

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	N/A	There is no explanation of any specific security measures taken.		
Different security measures for sensitive information	N/A			

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	N/A			
Banner advertisers and third-party ad networks	N/A			
Other third parties	N/A			

**While there is no site-wide privacy policy, there are confidentiality statements in some places where user information is collected.*

***Limited to antiretroviral HIV drugs.*

**** For the purposes of these sections, user rights and access and security are based on information in the confidentiality statements*

SITE OWNER: INTELIHEALTH INC.

- For-profit
- ✓ Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
 - Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy





ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- Displayed on homepage
- Displayed on additional pages
- Endorsed by:
 - TRUSTe
- ✓ HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/21/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- ✓ Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- ✓ E-mail article to colleague/friend
 - Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
 - Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
 - Surveys/polls


Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	The statement references Intelihealth as the only collector of information.		In some cases, Intelihealth allows advertisers to serve their own banner ads. This allows an advertiser to track a user's interest in specific health conditions.
What information is collected	Yes	"Whenever we ask for personal information (e.g. name, address, e-mail address, etc...), we will clearly disclose what information is required, what information is optional, and how that information may be used."		The policy does not state what information is collected by banner advertisers.
When and how information is collected	Yes	"For some of our services, we request that you register with InteliHealth. We also occasionally ask for personal information in other areas such as discussion groups or special offers such as sweepstakes. Whenever we ask for personal information (e.g. name, address, e-mail address, etc...), we will clearly disclose what information is required, what information is optional, and how that information may be used."		The policy does not state that information is collected by banner advertisers.
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes	See above.		The policy does not state how banner advertisers will use the information they collect.
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	"We do collect some information automatically (like the number of visitors and the pages visited.) This information is used to help us improve our site and make it more useful to you."		


Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	No			


Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to opt-out of or-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	InteliHealth uses information for promotional purposes. "Users may 'opt-out' of receiving these mailings."		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Maybe	"Under no circumstances will we ever disclose (to a third party) personal information about individual medical conditions or interests, except when we believe in good faith that the law requires it or to protect the rights and property of InteliHealth. " It is not clear if other information can be disclosed such as name, address and the telephone number.		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Maybe	See above. "We do disclose aggregate information which does not identify individuals to partners, advertisers and other third parties."		
Right to limit disclosures to third parties	Maybe	See above.		The user does not have a right to opt-out of disclosures to banner advertisers. In some cases, these disclosures include e-mail addresses tied to medical conditions and interests. In the Diabetes Diary, for example, e-mail addresses are sometimes put in the referring URLs.

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Maybe	The measures are not mentioned in the privacy statement; however, specific security measures are only explained on the "InteliHealth Healthy Home" page in conjunction with the ordering and payment of products: "InteliHealth Healthy Home uses one of the most advanced encrypting technologies available, Secure Socket Layering (SSL), to ensure that any information you receive or send will be encrypted for privacy in transit."		The site uses e-mail addresses as account names for site users, which is a security problem.
Different security measures for sensitive information	No			

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	"This Statement is not intended to and does not create any contractual or other legal rights in or on behalf of any party."		
Banner advertisers and third-party ad networks	No	See above.		
Other third parties	No	See above.		

SITE OWNER: IVILLAGE INC.

For-profit

- ✓ Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
- ✓ Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy*

ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
- ✓ Displayed on additional pages**

Endorsed by:*

TRUSTE





HON

Date policy downloaded:1/20/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- ✓ Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- ✓ E-mail article to colleague/friend
- ✓ Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
- ✓ Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	No	Presumably, iVillage, WellMed and allHealth can all collect information. The policies do not address their relationship in terms of data collection.		The policies do not state that user information, including interest in medical conditions, is collected by third-party ad networks.
What information is collected	Yes	The privacy policies for all three identify what information will be requested, what information is required, and what information is optional.		
When and how information is collected	Yes	<p>iVillage: The policy implies that the only information collected is that which the user supplies.</p> <p>allHealth: Has the same policy as iVillage, except that allHealth's policy mentions the use of cookies.</p> <p>WellMed: "We believe people must know in advance how personal health characteristics are collected and utilized. WellMed will always disclose its business practices in advance and will not deviate from its disclosure statement without the express consent of the individuals who have relied upon it."</p>		The policies do not state when and how information is gathered by third-party ad networks.
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes			The policies do not discuss how third-party ad networks will use information.
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	"iVillage reserves the right to offer you third party services and products based on the preferences that you identify during the registration process and based on your subsequent preferences; such offers may be provided to you by iVillage."		The site provides profiling information, including user interest in specific health conditions, to third-party ad networks.

Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	Maybe	The policies of iVillage and allHealth do not address this issue. WellMed also allows users to obtain a record of everyone who has accessed their WellRecord.		
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	No	allHealth and WellMed allow users to delete information by contacting the companies.		
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	<p>iVillage: Users are asked to opt-in to all uses and disclosures.</p> <p>allHealth: Generally users can choose to opt-in, except where they must opt-out of solicitations for surveys and contests.</p> <p>WellMed: Users can opt-in to a number of uses including the creation of an ER record that would be available in case of emergency.</p>		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	No	<p>iVillage: "iVillage allows access to database information by third-parties providing technical services, such as email, but only to the extent necessary to provide you with those services. "</p> <p>WellMed: "We encourage users of our products/tools to read the disclosure statements of the sponsoring organization so they are aware of any differences from our disclosure statement."</p>		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	No	<p>iVillage: iVillage also makes it clear that they can transfer their databases to another company if they are sold: "In addition, you agree that iVillage may assign, sell, license, or otherwise transfer to a third party, your name, address, email address, member name and any other personal information in connection with an assignment, sale, joint venture, or other transfer or disposition of a portion or all of the assets or stock of iVillage or its affiliated entities."</p> <p>allHealth: The policy indicates that information will not be shared with "anyone" and will not be sold or shared for marketing purposes. However, the policy later states: "When an allHealth member chooses to visit one of the WellMed licensed products, allHealth passes basic identification information about the user in an encrypted string to the WellMed server. This user information consists of your allHealth username, your first name and last name. We provide</p>		<p>Because allHealth uses WellMed to offer the HQ health assessment service, allHealth is handing off customers to WellMed without express notice to users. Specifically, allHealth passes off to WellMed the user's name, e-mail address, and birth date, in direct violation of their privacy policy. It appears that this personal data is encrypted in the query string of a URL. Once the user starts using the HQ service, a combination allHealth/WellMed privacy policy applies, and not the standard allHealth privacy policy. Even if the user declines to use the</p>

(continued)

this information to WellMed to make it easier for our members to start using this product."

HQ service after going to the page, allHealth has already given the personal data to WellMed.

Request to limit disclosures to third parties

No

iVillage:
"iVillage will not sell or reveal to any third party your name, address, email address and member name, unless you provide your informed consent."



The user does not have a right to limit information to third-party ad networks.

iVillage's definition of aggregate information is broad: "You understand and agree that iVillage may disclose to third parties your zip code, gender and/or age, but only in the form of aggregated information."

Some of the banner ads take the form of surveys that ask users to enter personal information. For example, on the iVillage home page a banner ad has the user take a body fat survey. When the "Go" button is hit, this information is sent to www.wlf.com and not iVillage. This practice is deceptive because it is hard to tell this ad from editorial content and personal information is sent to an unaffiliated entity.

allHealth:
The policy indicates that allHealth will only share aggregate data with third parties. However, "Other companies which advertise on our site may collect information about you when you visit or click on their advertising or content. allHealth does not control the collection of this information."

WellMed:
"It is WellMed's belief that the health information you entrust us to hold and maintain belongs only to you...No one has the right to access or review your information without your authorization."

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Maybe	iVillage does not mention any specific security measures. The allHealth policy only explains what security measures WellMed takes. The WellMed policy talks extensively about security including authentication, encryption, and firewalls.		

Different security measures for sensitive information

No

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	allHealth: The policy only talks about their relationship with WellMed and encourages users to review WellMed's privacy policy. WellMed: "WellMed works with many sponsoring organizations in making our products available to the consumer. We ask our sponsoring organizations to fully disclose their business practices in advance. We encourage users of our products/tools to read the disclosure statements of the sponsoring organization so they are aware of any differences from our disclosure		

statement. This policy applies to all of our products."

Banner advertisers and third party ad networks No

iVillage:
iVillage does not mention advertisers in their policies.

allHealth:
"Other companies which advertise on our site may collect information about you when you view or click on their advertising or content. allHealth does not control the collection of this information. You may want to contact these advertisers or content providers directly if you have any questions about their use of this information."

WellMed:
The policy informs users that advertisements are the responsibility of the sponsoring organization, in this case, iVillage.

Other third parties No

iVillage:
"iVillage allows access to database information by third-parties providing technical services, such as email, but only to the extent necessary to provide you with those services. In those instances, the third party is bound by these terms." The policy does not address chain of trust for those third parties which are not providing technical service.

* There are three relevant privacy policies: iVillage; allHealth; and WellMed. allHealth is the health channel for iVillage. WellMed contracts with allHealth for the following services: My Medical Home, My Personal Health Report, and My Health Files.

** Only the iVillage privacy policy is displayed on all pages. The WellMed policy is referenced the first time a user accesses their services. The allHealth policy is harder to find: it appears to only be made available in the MyHealthRecord section of the site.

*** I-Village and allHealth do not have privacy endorsements, but WellMed is endorsed by HON.

SITE OWNER: MAYO FOUNDATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Not-For-profit

Sells products or services

- ✓ Advertisements
- ✓ Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy

ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
- ✓ Displayed on additional pages

Endorsed by:

TRUSTe

HON





Date policy downloaded:1/28/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS


Chat rooms/bulletin boards

- ✓ Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- E-mail article to colleague/friend
- Free materials
- Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
- Medical history/record
- Product sales
- Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	"Mayo Clinic Health Oasis is committed to protecting the privacy of its users. Information gathered by Oasis is used to monitor our effectiveness in providing relevant and credible health information, in answering consumers' questions, and in improving the site."		The policy does not acknowledge that a third-party ad network (DoubleClick) is collecting user information.
What information is collected	Yes	"The only way we obtain your name or e-mail address is when you provide that information on a survey or feedback form, on a question submitted to Ask the Mayo Physician or Ask the Mayo Dietitian, or when you subscribe to our e-mail bulletins (Housecall, Nutrition Update, Alzheimer's Update, etc.)."		The policy does not note that personal health information is collected through health assessments. One of the site's health assessments has a disclaimer that reads: "This service is provided by Mayo Clinic as an educational tool. It will help you evaluate your drinking patterns. As soon as you exit this self-assessment, your answers are eliminated from our computer's memory. No records of individual responses will be kept, and there will be no attempt to identify any visitor to this page." Other assessments on the site, however, have no such disclaimer, making it unclear if that information is handled differently.
When and how information is collected	Yes	See above.		The policy does not state that information is collected through a third-party ad network.
How the information will be used and disclosed	Maybe	The policy states how Mayo Health Clinic Oasis will use information and that it will disclose names, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers to "carefully screened" market research firms with the user's permission. It does not say how those firms will use the information.		The policy does not address how the third-party ad network will use information.
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	"Mayo Clinic Health Oasis uses cookies only occasionally, when we need to monitor the number of visitors from certain other Web sites."		


Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	No	The user can remove e-mail address from lists, but cannot view or correct information submitted in health assessments.		
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	No	See above.		
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	Users can opt-in to surveys and newsletters.		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Maybe	"Mayo Clinic Health Oasis does not sell, trade or rent personal information about its users." There is no distinction among any affiliated or external parties.		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Yes	"Visitors who complete a site survey and indicate a willingness to participate in future surveys are asked to provide their names, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers. That information is shared with carefully screened market research firms with which Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research has business relationships."		
Right to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	"Mayo Clinic Health Oasis does not sell, trade or rent personal information about its users."		The user cannot limit disclosures of information to third-party ad networks.

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	No			
Different security measures for sensitive information	No			

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	The policy does not state what, if any, privacy policies govern the "carefully screened" market research firms who receive names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers.		
Banner advertisers and third-party ad networks	No	The policy does not address.		
Other third parties	No	The policy does not address.		

SITE OWNER: MEDICONSULT.COM LIMITED

- For-profit
 - Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
- ✓ Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy





ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
- ✓ Displayed on additional pages
- Endorsed by:
 - ✓ TRUSTe
 - ✓ HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/22/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS


- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- ✓ Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
 - E-mail article to colleague/friend
 - Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
 - Medical consultation
 - Medical history/record
 - Product sales
 - Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	The policy implies that Mediconsult.com is the only organization gathering information.		The policy does not acknowledge that a third-party ad network (DoubleClick) is gathering user information, including interest in specific medical conditions, which is placed in the IMG tags of banner ad URLs.
What information is collected	Yes			The policy does not state what information the third-party ad network is gathering.
When and how information is collected	Yes	Personal information is collected when a user registers for various website services including the MediStore, Visitor Survey, Community Newsletter, and the Support Group Bulletin Boards.		User information is also gathered by third-party ad network.
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes			The policy does not disclose how third-party ad network will use information.
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	"Cookies help us evaluate your use of our site, such as what kind of information you want to see and what kind you will never read."		

Users Access and Control


Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Maybe	Registered users may opt-out of newsletter e-mails; however, they may not opt-out of promotional e-mails.		Once a user has used the MediStore shopping service Mediconsult.com has reserved the right for itself and the respective vendor to contact the user by regular mail, phone, or e-mail for specified reasons.

Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Maybe	Mediconsult.com does not discuss any of these entities.		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Maybe	Mediconsult.com does not address business partners in the policy. See below.		
Request to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	"We will never share your personal information with any entity or organization without your 'informed consent.' For example, if an advertiser on our site offered to send you a coupon, you would need to supply your name and address for the mailing. Our policy is that you provided your 'informed consent' to mail the coupon by giving the advertiser your name and address. Your name and address is only given to this specific advertiser and is not kept by us or provided to any other external organization. We do not sell our email ID lists."		The user has no right to limit disclosures to third-party ad network.

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes			
Different security measures for sensitive information	Yes	<p>Technical: The MediStore uses Netscape's Secure Socket Service to encrypt credit card transactions and any other personal information related to the shopping and shipping services. Shipping details are stored on a secure server online to allow recall of shipping information for repeat orders.</p> <p>Procedural: The MediXperts service, which requires the user to provide detailed medical and personal information, is only accessible by the site's Medical Director and Customer Service Manager. Moreover, they will only access this information if there is a satisfaction problem or technical need. Further, "All personnel with access to personal information are aware of our policies. Any breach of policy would result in immediate dismissal."</p>		

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	Commerce partners who are privy to personal information have been screened to ensure they have appropriate policies in place, but Mediconsult's policies are not in effect. When a user clicks on a link that takes them off the Mediconsult.com site (e.g., to Information Partners), this Privacy Statement no longer applies.		
Banner advertisers and third party ad networks	No	The policy does not address.		
Other third parties	N/A	The policy indicates that information is not shared with third parties.		

SITE OWNER: MEDSCAPE INC.

- For-profit
- ✓ Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
- ✓ Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy


ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
- Displayed on additional pages
- Endorsed by:
- TRUSTe
- HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/21/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- ✓ E-mail article to colleague/friend
- ✓ Free materials
- Health assessment
- Medical consultation
- Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	No			Third-party ad networks (AvenueA, AdForce, and DoubleClick) collect user information.
What information is collected	No			
When and how information is collected	No			
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes	Medscape uses member data to: direct editorial content to members, determine the advertisements to be seen by members, have their user name and password 'remembered' by the server, measure site activity, advise members of new articles and features, market research, and special services.		Statement does not disclose how third-party ad networks will use and disclose information.
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	"Special Services. Medscape may offer services on a limited basis to demographically identified groups of members." "Cookie technology also helps Medscape determine which features and services are important to which audiences so that we may know where to invest our ongoing development and creative efforts." They also use a member's data to determine what advertisements are seen.		

Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	Yes	"Medscape Profile Modification allows you to view and edit your account information that is stored in our database. You can change your password, change your preferred Medscape Specialty Home Page, subscribe/unsubscribe to/from the various MedPlus editions, and update or view your account information." (Not stated in Policy but on the "Medscape Personalization Page.")		
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	Yes	See above.		
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Maybe	Users can unsubscribe to e-mail contact. They cannot opt-out of market research performed by the site, including research on behalf of third parties.		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Maybe	The policy does not address agents, suppliers and affiliates.		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Yes	At the member's request, Medscape may provide communications and services between a third party and the Medscape member. For example, U.S. physicians may wish to request drug samples from a manufacturer. This would require that the member release their name and address to the manufacturer. In all such instances the information to be released to the third party will be explicitly noted to the member.		
Request to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	"Medscape does NOT: Provide or release names or e-mail addresses of members to any third party without the member's explicit permission." It is unclear whom they consider a "third party."		

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	No			
Different security measures for sensitive information	Yes	The Medscape Personalization page provides a visitor with the option to opt-in for additional security. "To request secure form for editing/viewing your information please click here..."		

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	The policy does not indicate whether business partners are bound by the policy.		
Banner advertisers and third party ad networks	No	The policy does not indicate whether banner advertisers are bound by the privacy policy.		
Other third parties	N/A	The policy states that Medscape does not share information with third parties.		

SITE OWNER: MENTAL HEALTH NET

- Not-For-profit
- ✓ Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
- ✓ Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies*
- ✓ Privacy policy



ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
- Displayed on additional pages
- Endorsed by:
- TRUSTe
- HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/21/00



INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- ✓ E-mail article to colleague/friend
- Free materials
- Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
- Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	The policy notifies users that both Mental Health Net and advertisers are collecting information.		
What information is collected	Yes	The policy acknowledges that advertisers have access to some information. "Other companies which place advertising on our site also have the ability to assign a different cookie to you in a process that Mental Health Net does not control. But since cookies aren't usable for identifying individuals (you'll be just a number to them), these advertisers will never know who you are - and Mental Health Net will never tell them!"		The third-party advertiser, Flycast, may or may not have a program in place to identify users.
When and how information is collected	Yes	Among other items, the policy includes a discussion of cookies, which are only used in the discussion area.		
How the information will be used and disclosed	No	The policy states "individually identifiable information will only be used within Mental Health Net" but does not tell the user what those uses include beyond analyzing "what customers like and don't like."		
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	The policy clarifies that "[w]e do not use information about what you are searching for to help focus the advertisements we present to you. We also do not track search engine usage." The policy also states that users may be profiled by third-party advertisers: "Other companies which place advertising on our site may collect information about you when you view or click on their advertising or content. Mental Health Net does not control this collection of information. You should contact these advertisers or content providers directly if you have any questions about their use of this information."		The Flycast privacy policy states that they do profiling: "This cookie can help Flycast ensure that we don't serve you the same ad multiple times, and help our advertisers understand what you like and don't like about their offerings so that they can cater better to your needs the next time you are interested in their products or services." The Flycast privacy policy does not discuss whether health-related issues are profiled or not.


Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	No	The policy indicates that they will remove users "and all of their identifying information from our computer systems" when there has been no usage for more than 6 months, or the e-mail address expires.		
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	The policy states that users can decline to be listed in directories, decline the newsletter, or simply not provide information in the first place.		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	No	"The individually identifiable information that you provide will only be used within Mental Health Net."		The site's e-mail list is maintained by another company, Postmaster General
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Yes	"We do not share any personal information you provide to us (including, but not limited to, your name, e-mail address, and related information) to any outside party for any reason whatsoever. Let us make this absolutely clear: Mental Health Net will never willfully disclose individually identifiable information about its users to any third party without first receiving that individual's permission."		
Right to limit disclosures to third parties	No	"We do not share any personal information you provide to us (including, but not limited to, your name, e-mail address, and related information) to any outside party for any reason whatsoever." "Other companies which place advertising on our site may collect information about you when you view or click on their advertising or content."		The user does not have a right to limit information to the third-party ad network. In fact, Flycast provides demographics for this site on its own site. These numbers raise the question, where did the information come from? Most likely not from Mental Health Net itself, but from other sites. Flycast cookies are then used to match this information to visits to Mental Health Net.

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	No			
Different security measures for sensitive information	No			

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	N/A	The policy indicates that information is not disclosed to business partners.		E-mail lists are handled by an outside vendor, and it is unclear if the vendor is bound by these policies.
Banner advertisers and third-party ad networks	No	"Other companies which place advertising on our site may collect information about you when you view or click on their advertising		

or content. Mental Health Net does not control this collection of information. You should contact these advertisers or content providers directly if you have any questions about their use of this information."

"Mental Health Net works with a third party that serves ads to this site. To find out more about how flycast manages the privacy of information in conjunction with serving ads on this site, please go to http://www.flycast.com/about_us/about-privacy.html."

Other third parties

N/A

See above.

SITE OWNER: MOTHERNATURE.COM INC.

For-profit

- ✓ Sells products or services
- Advertisements
- Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy

ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
- ✓ Displayed on additional pages

Endorsed by:




- ✓ TRUSTe
- HON

Date policy downloaded:1/19/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- E-mail article to colleague/friend
- Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
- Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	The policy implies that MotherNature.com is the only entity collecting information.		
What information is collected	Yes	<p>In various places, the policy discusses specific shipping information and demographic information collected for specific services. In addition, the policy states, "Our experienced Personal Shopper can identify products that meet your needs, based on the information you provide." However, the "information you provide" is not explained.</p> <p>"To ensure easy shopping and timely product delivery we ask for shipping information including your email address and phone number so we can quickly communicate with you about the status of your order. Additionally, we ask for limited demographic information including your birth-date and gender, which enables us to continually update our site to better meet the needs of our members."</p> <p>"When you order from MotherNature.com, we ask for your name, address, and credit card -all of which are necessary for purchase and delivery."</p>		The policy does not address how the site also collects very specific health information such as medical conditions, alcohol consumption, smoking, and exercise through its "personalized supplement planner."
When and how information is collected	Yes	See above.		The policy statement does not acknowledge the "personalized supplement planner" service as a tool for collecting information.
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes	<p>See above.</p> <p>"Our experienced Personal Shopper can identify products that meet your needs, based on the information you provide."</p> <p>"We will never release your name, street address, telephone number or e-mail address without your consent."</p>		The policy does not address how information gathered in the "personalized supplement planner" will be used.

The policy does not say whether information is shared with any affiliated entities or business partners.

Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	<p>"We use the information we collect about you...to provide a more personalized shopping experience."</p> <p>"[W]e ask for limited demographic information including your birth-date and gender, which enables us to continually update our site to better meet the needs of our members."</p>
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Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	Yes	"Users can view and edit their online profile."		
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	Yes	Membership information can be changed and made "inactive," but cannot be deleted. Also, the "personalized supplement planner" can be updated.		
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	The user has a right to opt-in to membership, newsletters, and personal shopper service.		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Maybe	"We will never release your name, street address, telephone number or e-mail address without your consent." It is unclear to whom this applies.		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Maybe	See above.		
Right to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	See above.		

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes	Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology is used to encrypt all information sent to place an order.		
Different security measures for sensitive information	No	The policy does not address this issue.		

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	The policy does not address business partners.		
Banner advertisers and third-party ad networks	N/A	The site does not have advertisements.		
Other third parties	N/A	Presumably, MotherNature.com does not disclose to third parties.		

SITE OWNER: UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

CANCER CENTER

Not-For-profit

Sells products or services

✓ Advertisements

Third-party ad networks

Uses cookies

✓ Privacy policy

ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

✓ Displayed on homepage

✓ Displayed on additional pages

Endorsed by:

TRUSTe

HON

Date policy downloaded:1/19/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

Chat rooms/bulletin boards

Drug interactions

Electronic newsletter

✓ E-mail article to colleague/friend

✓ Free materials

Health assessment

Medical consultation

Medical history/record

Product sales

Registration

✓ Search strings

Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	The policy implies that OncoLink.com is the only entity collecting information.		
What information is collected	Yes	"On some OncoLink web pages, you can make requests, and register to receive materials. The types of personal information collected at these pages are name and contact information. In order to tailor our subsequent communications to you and continuously improve our products and services, we may also ask you to voluntarily provide us with information regarding your experience with cancer, personal or professional interests, demographics and contact preferences."		
When and how information is collected	Yes	See above.		
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes	"We use your information to help you complete a transaction, to communicate back to you, to update you on service and benefits, and to personalize our web site for you."		
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	See above.		

Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	No			
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	No			

(continued)

Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	<p>"From time to time, we may also use your information to contact you for market research or to provide you with marketing information we think would be of particular interest. At a minimum, we will always give you the opportunity to opt out of receiving such direct marketing or market research contact. We will also follow local requirements, such as allowing you to opt in before receiving unsolicited contact, where applicable."</p> <p>"Your permission is always secured first, should we ever share your information with third parties that are not acting on our behalf and governed by our privacy policy."</p>
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	No	"Unless we have your permission or are required by law, we will only share the personal data you provide online with other OncoLink entities and/or business partners who are acting on our behalf to complete the activities described above."
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	No	See above.
Right to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	See above.

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes	"To prevent unauthorized access, maintain data accuracy, and ensure the appropriate use of information, we have put in place appropriate physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information we collect online."		
Different security measures for sensitive information	Yes	"We use encryption when collecting or transferring sensitive data such as credit card information."		

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	Yes	"Such OncoLink entities and/or business partners, including those located in other countries, are governed by our privacy policies with respect to the use of this data."		
Banner advertisers and third-party ad networks	Yes	The policy implies that they treat banner advertisers in the same way as other partners. See above.		All banner advertisements are sent from OncoLink's own servers, preventing profiling by outsiders.
Other third parties	N/A	According to their policy, they do not share information with third parties.		

SITE OWNER: ONHEALTH NETWORK CO.

- For-profit
- ✓ Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
- ✓ Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy*


ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
- ✓ Displayed on additional pages**
- Endorsed by:***
- TRUSTe
- ✓ HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/21/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- ✓ Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- ✓ E-mail article to colleague/friend
- Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment**
- ✓ Medical consultation**
- Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	No	Neither policy states who is collecting information. There is no explanation of the relationship between OnHealth and WellMed.		<p>OnHealth: The policy does not state that an outside vendor (WellMed) collects health information in the Personal Health Assessment.</p> <p>WellMed: The separate user agreement, with a privacy policy, for this service does not clearly spell out who is collecting the information.</p>
What information is collected	Maybe	<p>OnHealth: No reference to any health information collected on the site.</p> <p>WellMed: "We ask for certain physical measurements including blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and height and weight. We ask about your family health history and your own medical expenses. We ask about lifestyle patterns including exercise, smoking, alcohol use and diet. And we ask about topics including coping and stress"</p>		
When and how information is collected	Maybe	<p>OnHealth: The policy does not state how they collect information.</p> <p>WellMed: The policy is clearly related only to information gathered through the Personal Health Assessment.</p>		
How the information will be used and disclosed	Maybe	<p>OnHealth: The policy does not say how they will use information. It only states that they will not "release" information without consent.</p> <p>WellMed: "The software programs use over 5,000 calculations to analyze your information, identify personal health risks, measure those risks, and outline steps that can be taken to prevent serious medical problems in the future, or to enhance good health."</p>		

(continued)

Whether visitors will be profiled No



The site profiles users.

Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	No	Neither policy addresses the user's right to view the information submitted.		The user has a right to view some of the information submitted.
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	No	Neither policy addresses the user's right to view information submitted though WellMed states: "If you choose to stop participating in the HQ Personal Assessment, you have the following options for removing information from the database:..."		The user has a right to correct some information submitted
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	No			The user can opt-in to receive an electronic newsletter, register for the site, and participate in other activities.
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Yes	OnHealth: "We will never release your name, street address, telephone number or e-mail address without your consent." WellMed: "Neither the personnel of WellMed nor anyone else has the right to review [medical and health records] without your expressed authorization "		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Yes	OnHealth: "We may...distribute aggregate information about our users to advertisers or business associates, but we will never individually identify you."		The consent form for the Personal Health Assessment does not explicitly ask for the right to release personal information to WellMed though WellMed receives the data.
Right to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	OnHealth: "We will never release your name, street address, telephone number or e-mail address without your consent." WellMed: "WellMed will never willfully disclose your individual information to any employer, insurer, physician or health care professional, family member, or anyone else, unless you expressly authorize WellMed to do so."		

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes	OnHealth: The policy states only that "[we] deploy computer encryption technology to protect the information you send us." WellMed: The site uses SSL, host site-specific multi-level security applications, and Windows NT distributed security technology, as well as both a user name and password.		

(continued)

Different security measures for sensitive information

No



Personal health information can be accessed without login and password.

It also appears that access to entire database is possible with debugging software.

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	Neither policy addresses.		
Banner advertisers and third party ad networks	No	OnHealth: The policy does not address. WellMed: There are no banner advertisers or third-party ad networks.		WellMed: The WellMed pages are frames with the OnHealth pages, where the banner ads are located.
Other third parties	N/A	Both policies indicate that information will not be disclosed to third parties.		

* There are two relevant privacy policies: OnHealth's and WellMed. WellMed contracts with OnHealth for their Personal Health Assessment.

**The OnHealth policy statement is displayed on most pages. The pages in the Personal Health Assessment have no posted policy following acceptance of a user agreement that includes a privacy policy.

***OnHealth is endorsed by HON, but WellMed has no privacy endorsement.

SITE OWNER: PLANETRX.COM INC.

For-profit

- ✓ Sells products or services
 - Advertisements
 - Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy

ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
 - ✓ Displayed on additional pages
- Endorsed by:
- ✓ TRUSTe
 - ✓ HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/21/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- ✓ Drug interactions/searches
- Electronic newsletter
- E-mail article to colleague/friend
- Free materials
- Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
- ✓ Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	The policy implies that PlanetRx.com is the only entity collecting information.		
What information is collected	Yes	The policy identifies the information that will be collected in conjunction with four activities: purchasing nonprescription products, filling prescriptions, creating medical history profiles, and personalizing the shopping experience.		
When and how information is collected	Yes	See above.		
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes	"PlanetRx will never willfully sell, trade, rent, disclose, or make available personally identifiable information about you to any third party without first receiving your permission..." The policy also explains internal use of information.		
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	"We gather traffic patterns and site usage information to... personalize your shopping experience. As a standard practice, PlanetRx assigns a random number to each user for anonymously tracking content preferences and traffic patterns. This random number lets us keep track of how many times customers are doing specific things, like visiting our site each month, without really knowing who those customers are. This random number is kept in a file on your computer, and is called a "cookie." Cookies, by themselves, cannot be used to determine the identity of any user. Unless you specifically tell us, PlanetRx will never know who you are. "		"The personally identifiable information that you provide to us will be used to process your order and to provide you a customized and valuable user experience."

Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	Yes	"You may correct and update your personal information at any time."		
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	Yes	See above.		
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	Users have the option to receive e-mail announcements and promotions.		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Yes	"None of your information can be accessed or released without your consent."		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Yes	See above.		
Right to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	<p>"PlanetRx will never willfully sell, trade, rent, disclose, or make available personally identifiable information about you to any third party without first receiving your permission, except when we believe in good faith that the law requires it, or to protect the rights or property of PlanetRx."</p> <p>"We never tell our partners who it was that saw or clicked on their advertisements unless you have specifically told us this is acceptable."</p>		

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes	We use secure web pages to take all orders and to display prescription information...All information is stored in a secure database behind a firewall. Your account is accessible only by entering your user name and password. We use Secure Socket Layer (SSL) software...Personal information such as your password, address, and credit card number is encrypted (using 128-bit encryption) for transit over the Internet."		
Different security measures for sensitive information	No			

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	N/A	"None of your information can be accessed or released without your consent."		
Banner advertisers and third-party ad networks	N/A	The website does not have advertisements.		
Other third parties	N/A	"PlanetRx will never willfully sell, trade, rent, disclose, or make available personally identifiable information about you to any third party without first receiving your permission, except when we believe in good faith that the law requires it, or to protect the rights or property of PlanetRx."		

SITE OWNER: BODY RESOURCES CORPORATION

- For-profit
 - Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
 - Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
 - Privacy policy*





ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

N/A Displayed on homepage
 N/A Displayed on additional pages
 Endorsed by:
 TRUSTe
 HON
 Date policy downloaded:1/21/00


INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- ✓ Drug interactions/searches
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
 - E-mail article to colleague/friend
 - Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
- ✓ Medical history/record
 - Product sales
 - Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	N/A	The Body does not have a site-wide privacy policy; however, participation in the Health Survey requires users to proactively agree to a Participation Agreement with The Body that addresses information collection and use. There are confidentiality statements in other locations where information is gathered.		This site has no privacy policy.
What information is collected	N/A			See above.
When and how information is collected	N/A			See above.
How the information will be used and disclosed	N/A	<p>"Please provide your e-mail address in the space below, and we will put you on a confidential list of our visitors to whom we distribute regular updates about new features and information at The Body...At no time will we give out your address to other online services or organizations."</p> <p>"When you access The Body's bulletin board server, it keeps no log of your Internet protocol address, which in some cases could reveal your identity. Further, The Body delivers to your browser small data structures that serve to identify you during a bulletin board session (sometimes called "cookies"), but we do not use them to store personal information about you, track your movements to other sites, or sell information about you to others. "</p> <p>"The purpose of this authorization is to provide your health information, including your HIV-related health information, to various clinical researchers and laboratories via The Body so that such researchers and laboratories can evaluate your suitability for clinical tests and studies. You also</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(continued)</i></p>		<p>See above.</p> <p>There is no definition of what confidential means in this context, who has access to the list, how it is stored, etc.</p>

authorize The Body to release this information to third-party technology providers that The Body deems suitable, in its sole and absolute discretion, for the purpose of storing your health information and transmitting it to clinical researchers and laboratories."

Whether visitors will be profiled	N/A	The statement on cookies in the bulletin board area says they are not used to track movements.		See above. It is unclear if cookies are used elsewhere for profiling.
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Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	N/A			Users cannot view information submitted in health survey
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	N/A			Users cannot correct information submitted in health survey.
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	N/A			
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	N/A	Users are notified that they may not limit disclosures once the health survey is submitted: "You authorize The Body to release any and all health information, including all HIV-related health information, that you provide in the Health Survey to various clinical researchers and laboratories that The Body determines, in its sole and absolute discretion, may be able to utilize your information to match your medical profile with clinical tests and studies."		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	N/A	See above. There is no definition of who the clinical researchers or third party technology parties are.		
Right to limit disclosures to third parties	N/A	See above.		

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	N/A	"The Body will take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of your responses to the Health Survey, including encrypting all transmissions that include the responses you provide. "		
Different security measures for sensitive information	N/A			

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	N/A	"At no time will we give out your address to other online services or organizations." There is no mention of whether the information will be shared with "offline" services or organizations		
Banner advertisers and third-party ad networks	N/A			There are banner advertisers on the site, but they appear to all come from The Body's own server.
Other third parties	N/A	There is no statement about the privacy policies of entities that may receive information from the Health Survey, though it does state that the information is governed by New York state laws related to confidentiality of HIV-related information. However, there is substantial non-HIV-related health information gathered through the Health Survey.		

* The Body does not have a site-wide privacy policy, but does have confidentiality information in several locations where information is collected, including registration for e-mail updates, bulletin boards and chat rooms, and a health assessment for referring users to clinical researchers.

SITE OWNER: HEALTHEON/WEBMD

For-profit

- ✓ Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
- ✓ Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy

ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

Displayed on homepage

- ✓ Displayed on additional pages

Endorsed by:


- ✓ TRUSTe
- ✓ HON

Date policy downloaded:1/20/00

INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS



- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- Drug interactions
- ✓ Electronic newsletter
- E-mail article to colleague/friend
- ✓ Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
- ✓ Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes			
What information is collected	Yes			
When and how information is collected	Yes	"Sponsors and advertisers may also use Cookies when you select their advertisement; we are unable to control their use of Cookies or how they manage the information they gather."		The policy does not state that "sponsors and advertisers" also collect cookie information when the ad appears on the page even if the user does not "select" the ad.
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes			
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	"This information helps us dynamically generate advertising and content on web pages specifically designed for you and also allows us to statistically monitor how many people are using our site and for what purpose."		It appears that the third-party ad network (DoubleClick) is doing health condition-specific profiling for WebMD using information being passed to DoubleClick in URLs.

Users Access and Control


Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	Yes	The user has access to and control of information submitted through registration, member profile and MyHealthRecord, but has no access to or control of other information collected, including answers to surveys and questionnaires.		
Right to correct information submitted voluntarily	Yes	See above.		
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	Registered users may opt-out of newsletter and receiving promotional e-mails.		

Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Maybe	"Any Personal Information provided to entities affiliated with WebMD will be treated in accordance with the terms of this Privacy Policy, unless you are otherwise notified." The logic is fairly circular: it is unclear what is permitted by WebMD and, thus, it is hard to know how affiliates are held to the same standards.		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Maybe	"Sponsors and advertisers may also use Cookies when you select their advertisement; we are unable to control their use of Cookies or how they manage the information they gather."		See above. "Sponsors and advertisers may also use Cookies when you select their advertisement; we are unable to control their use of Cookies or how they manage the information they gather."
Right to limit disclosures to third parties	No	"Except as set forth in this paragraph, WebMD will not disclose to unaffiliated companies any information it gathers from you which could be used to identify or contact you ('Personal Information')."		The user cannot limit disclosures to third-party ad networks.

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes			
Different security measures for sensitive information	Yes	MyHealthRecord is protected by SSL. "The information you submit to MyHealthRecord will be stored on a separate server as an additional security precaution. However, we do not warrant or represent that the information you submit to MyHealthRecord will be protected against, loss, misuse, or alteration by third parties."		

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	"Any Personal Information provided to entities affiliated with WebMD will be treated in accordance with the terms of this Privacy Policy, unless you are otherwise notified... We will attempt to require that each of these Vendors not further use or disclose your Personal Information for any purpose other than providing us or you with products and services. Of course, we cannot guarantee their compliance with these restrictions."		
Banner advertisers and third-party ad networks	No	"Sponsors and advertisers may also use Cookies when you select their advertisement; we are unable to control their use of Cookies or how they manage the information they gather."		
Other third parties	No	"WebMD cannot and does not assume any responsibility or liability for any information you submit to MyHealthRecord or your or third parties' use or misuse of information transmitted or received using MyHealthRecord."		

* There is not a registration option for the site, but people can become a member of the organization by making a donation.

SITE OWNER: YAHOO! INC.

- For-profit
- ✓ Sells products or services
- ✓ Advertisements
 - Third-party ad networks
- ✓ Uses cookies
- ✓ Privacy policy*


ABOUT THE PRIVACY POLICY

- ✓ Displayed on homepage
- ✓ Displayed on additional pages
- Endorsed by:
 - ✓ TRUSTe
 - HON
- Date policy downloaded:1/26/00



INFORMATION COLLECTION POINTS

- ✓ Chat rooms/bulletin boards
- ✓ Drug interactions
 - Electronic newsletter
 - E-mail article to colleague/friend
 - Free materials
- ✓ Health assessment
- ✓ Medical consultation
 - Medical history/record
- ✓ Product sales
- ✓ Registration
- ✓ Search strings
- ✓ Surveys/polls

Notice to User

Policy States:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Who is collecting information	Yes	<p>When you are on a Yahoo! Site and are asked for personal information, you are sharing that information with Yahoo! alone, unless it is specifically stated otherwise." Information may be shared with partner companies.</p> <p>"In order to provide this co-branded service to you, it is necessary for us to share your personal information with our partner company. If data is being collected and/or maintained by any company other than Yahoo!, you will be notified prior to the time of the data collection or transfer. If you do not want your data to be shared, you can choose not to allow the transfer by not using that particular service."</p> <p>"Advertising networks that serve ads onto Yahoo! may also use their own cookies."</p>		<p>Yahoo! provides a personal health test, which is serviced by HealthCentral.com. All data for this test goes to a server at HealthCentral.com and not Yahoo! The user is not notified that the information is going to HealthCentral.com. In addition, Yahoo! does the login and passes some encrypted data to HealthCentral.com.</p>
What information is collected	Yes	<p>"The more information you volunteer... the better we are able to customize your experience." Users are not required to answer every question on The Personal Health Test to use the service.</p>		
When and how information is collected	Yes	<p>Information is collected at registration; upon entrance in a sweepstakes, contest, or promotion; through purchases, surveys, and website submissions; and in other ways. The policy also explains the use of cookies.</p> <p>Yahoo! "will notify you at the time of data collection or transfer if your data will be shared with a third party..."</p>		<p>It is not clear when Yahoo!'s Health Privacy Policy is in effect. Many of the health pages that collect information link to the policy and the policy states, "The following discusses how Yahoo! treats health-related data collected on the Yahoo! Health site." However, the rest of the statement is dedicated solely to The Personal Health Test, which is one very distinct service out of multiple health-related services on the site.</p>
How the information will be used and disclosed	Yes	<p>The policy explains both uses and disclosures and relevant choices available to the user.</p>		
Whether visitors will be profiled	Yes	<p>Yahoo! uses cookies for a number of reasons, including "to help target advertisements based on user interests and behavior."</p>		

Users Access and Control

Policy Provides User:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Right to view information submitted voluntarily	Yes	Users are allowed to "edit" their Yahoo! Account Information and public Yahoo! profile. By implication, users may view this information. Users may "access and edit" The Personal Health Test.		
Right to correct information they voluntarily submit	Yes	See above. Additionally, users may ask to have their account deleted or deactivated, or update an e-mail address on a promotions mailing list.		
Right to opt-out of or opt-in to specific uses and disclosures	Yes	Users may opt-in to "special offers via e-mail." Users may opt-out of promotional e-mails as a result of participation in a promotion.		
Right to limit disclosures to agents, suppliers and affiliates	Maybe	<u>Yahoo Privacy Policy</u> "Yahoo will never rent or sell your personal financial or health-related information." Yahoo! also states that "as a general rule" they will not "disclose any of your personally identifiable information" but includes a list of exceptions. The only way to avoid disclosure is to refuse participation in most services and offers. In addition, the policy states that Yahoo! "may disclose account information when [they] have reason to believe that disclosing information is necessary to identify, contact or bring legal action against someone who may be violating Yahoo!'s Terms of Service or may be causing injury to or interference with (either intentionally or unintentionally) Yahoo!'s rights or property, other Yahoo! users, or anyone else that could be harmed by such activities.		
Right to limit disclosures to business partners	Maybe	<u>Yahoo Privacy Policy</u> When Yahoo! provides a "co-branded" service they will "share your personal information" with the partner company. Users may choose not to use the service to avoid disclosure.		Users cannot opt-out of disclosure of information to HealthCentral because they are not informed of the disclosure.
Right to limit disclosures to third parties	Yes	<u>Yahoo Privacy Policy</u> "We will notify you at the time of data collection or transfer if your data will be shared with a third party and you will always have the option of not permitting the transfer." <u>Yahoo Health Privacy Policy</u> "Yahoo! will never sell or rent your personal health data or any personal data to a third party. We will never share any personally identifying information about you without your permission."		User cannot opt-out of disclosures to third-party ad networks, though it appears that no medical condition information is transmitted in URLs to the networks.

Security

Policy Explains:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Specific security measures explained	Yes	Yahoo! accounts are password protected. Few other specific security measures are described.		
Different security measures for sensitive information	Yes	"All information collected from the health test is stored separately from your Yahoo! registration information." In addition, transmission of credit card information is in encrypted format.		

Chain of Trust

Policy Binding on:	Yes/No	Notes on Policy	Areas of Concern	Notes on Practices
Business partners	No	The policy does not address.		
Banner advertisers and third-party ad networks	No	The policy does not address.		
Other third parties	N/A	The policy indicates that information will not be shared with third parties.		