

**FTC International Web Survey:
Disclosure of General Business and Contract-Related Information
by Online Retailers**

Survey Methodology

- FTC staff conducted an informal survey of 200 websites – 100 “domestic” sites and 100 “international” sites (including 17 countries) – to determine what types of information retailers disclose online. FTC staff defined “International” websites as those who provided a non-US physical address when registering for the domain name, and “Domestic” websites as those who provided a US physical address.
- The URLs were selected from two random samples: 1,700 “International” and 500 “Domestic” websites with retail SIC codes. The samples were provided by Dun & Bradstreet.
- These survey results are intended only as a “snapshot” of current disclosure practices on the Web and not intended to be representative of all online retail practices.
- Sites not in English were excluded from the survey. Also excluded were sites not offering consumer goods appropriate for cross-border sales (e.g. groceries or trucks). Sites were included even if they did not allow consumers to buy goods online. No determination was made as to whether sites actually engage in cross-border sales.
- Certain websites had several methods of sales and delivery (online and offline). Therefore, total number of sales and delivery methods may not equal total sample sizes.
- FTC staff review of each web sites was halted at the point where the site requested payment information.

Survey Terms

“Hard to Find Information” – information that was: time consuming or difficult to locate; numerous clicks away from the initial set of disclosures; or poorly labeled, such as an applicable law provision behind a “copyright information” link.

“Physical Address” – the physical street address, regardless of whether the country name was disclosed.

“Cancellation Terms” – included information regarding a cooling off period.

“Refund Policy” – included disclosures that said “no refund”.

“Costs Paid to the Business or Seller” – costs paid directly to the business and not third parties, such as price, sales tax, and shipping.

“Other Costs” – costs paid separately or paid to an entity other than the business, such as tariffs, duties, and COD charges.

“Currency” – information sufficient to designate the relevant currency. Where one currency symbol could be used to designate more than one country’s currency, simply posting the symbol was not considered to be a currency disclosure. For example, “\$10.00” was not considered to be a currency disclosure but “U.S. \$10.00” and “Can. \$10.00” were considered to be currency disclosures.

“Delivery Terms” – terms disclosing at least the time period for delivery.

“Other Contract-Related Disclosures” – disclosures such as alternative dispute resolution procedures.

SURVEY RESULTS BY QUESTION - FULL SAMPLE

QUESTION	TOTAL SITES (200)						DOMESTIC SITES (100)						INTERNATIONAL SITES (100)						
	YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND		YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND		YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND		
	% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		
Was the name of the business disclosed?	97%	194	3%	6	1.5%	3	98%	98	2%	2	2%	2	96%	96	4%	4	1%	1	
Was the physical address or P.O. Box disclosed?	84%	168	16%	32	8%	16	90%	90	10%	10	9%	9	9%	78	78	22%	22	7%	7
Was the country stated or obvious from the website's context or images?	54%	108	46%	92	4%	8	29%	29	71%	71	2%	2	79%	79	21%	21	6%	6	
Was the phone number of the business disclosed?	88%	176	12%	24	4%	8	92%	92	8%	8	5%	5	84%	84	16%	16	3%	3	

SURVEY RESULTS BY QUESTION - FULL SAMPLE

QUESTION	TOTAL SITES (200)						DOMESTIC SITES (100)						INTERNATIONAL SITES (100)					
	YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND		YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND		YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND	
	% SITES		% SITES		% SITES	% SITES		% SITES		% SITES	% SITES		% SITES		% SITES	% SITES		% SITES
Was the fax number of the business disclosed?	70.5%	141	29.5%	59	2.5%	5	71%	71	29%	29	3%	3	70%	70	30%	30	2%	2
Was the e-mail address of the business disclosed?	89.5%	179	10.5%	21	3.5%	7	91%	91	9%	9	5%	5	88%	88	12%	12	2%	2
Were geographic restrictions on the sales area disclosed?	17%	34	83%	166	3.5%	7	21%	21	79%	79	4%	4	13%	13	87%	87	3%	3
Was all business information except geographic restrictions disclosed?	34.5%	69	65.5%	131	na	na	18%	18	82%	82	na	na	51%	51	49%	49	na	na
Was all sales information excluding applicable law disclosed?	0.5%	1	99.5%	199	na	na	0%	0	100%	100	na	na	1%	1	99%	99	na	na

SURVEY RESULTS BY QUESTION - FULL SAMPLE

QUESTION	TOTAL SITES (200)						DOMESTIC SITES (100)						INTERNATIONAL SITES (100)					
	YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND		YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND		YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND	
	% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES	
Was all information excluding geographic restrictions and applicable law disclosed?	0.5%	1	99.5%	199	na	na	0%	0	100%	100	na	na	1%	1	99%	99	na	na
CONTRACT TERMS																		
Were cancellation terms disclosed?*	7.5%	15	92.5%	185	0%	0	6%	6	94%	94	0%	0	9%	9	91%	91	0%	0
Was the refund policy disclosed?*	22%	44	78%	156	0.5%	1	26%	26	74%	74	1%	1	18%	18	82%	82	0%	0
Were the total costs to be paid to the business disclosed?*	53%	106	47%	94	3%	6	51%	51	49%	49	2%	2	55%	55	45%	45	4%	4
Were the other costs (e.g., tariffs, duties, COD) disclosed?*	18.5%	37	81.5%	163	1%	2	17%	17	83%	83	0%	0	20%	20	80%	80	2%	2

SURVEY RESULTS BY QUESTION - FULL SAMPLE

QUESTION	TOTAL SITES (200)						DOMESTIC SITES (100)						INTERNATIONAL SITES (100)					
	YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND		YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND		YES		NO		YES BUT HARD TO FIND	
	% SITES		% SITES		% SITES	% SITES		% SITES		% SITES	% SITES		% SITES		% SITES	% SITES		% SITES
Was the currency applicable to the sale disclosed?*	31.5%	63	68.5%	137	1.5%	3	11%	11	89%	89	1%	1	52%	52	48%	48	2%	2
Were delivery terms disclosed?*	32.5%	65	67.5%	135	0.5%	1	32%	32	68%	68	1%	1	33%	33	67%	67	0%	0
Were warranty terms disclosed?	15%	30	85%	170	0%	0	17%	17	83%	83	0%	0	13%	13	87%	87	0%	0
Was the law applicable to the sale disclosed?	7.5%	15	92.5%	185	0.5%	1	4%	4	96%	96	1%	1	11%	11	89%	89	0%	0

GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING HOW SITES SELL AND DELIVER GOODS*												
QUESTION	TOTAL SITES (200)				DOMESTIC SITES (100)				INTERNATIONAL SITES (100)			
	YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO	
	%	SITES	%	SITES	%	SITES	%	SITES	%	SITES	%	SITES
Were the goods sold online but shipped offline?	52.5%	105	47.5%	95	56%	56	44%	44	49%	49	51%	51
Were the goods sold online and delivered online?	9%	18	91%	182	4%	4	96%	96	14%	14	86%	86
Were the goods sold offline and shipped offline?	75%	150	25%	50	84%	84	16%	16	66%	66	34%	34

CONTRACT - RELATED DISCLOSURES FOR ONLINE SALES*												
QUESTION	TOTAL SITES (120)				DOMESTIC SITES (58)				INTERNATIONAL SITES (62)			
*see survey methodology and survey terms	YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO	
	%	SITES	%	SITES	%	SITES	%	SITES	%	SITES	%	SITES
Were cancellation terms disclosed?*	9%	11	91%	109	7%	4	93%	54	11%	7	89%	55
Was the refund policy disclosed?*	26%	31	74%	89	28%	16	72%	42	24%	15	76%	47
Were the total costs to be paid to the business disclosed?*	65%	78	35%	42	66%	38	34%	20	65%	40	35%	22
Were the other costs (e.g., tariffs, duties, COD) disclosed?*	26%	31	74%	89	26%	15	74%	43	26%	16	74%	46
Was the currency applicable to the sale disclosed?*	38%	46	62%	74	16%	9	84%	49	60%	37	40%	25
Were delivery terms disclosed?*	38%	46	62%	74	34%	20	66%	38	42%	26	58%	36
Were warranty terms disclosed?	20%	24	80%	96	22%	13	78%	45	18%	11	82%	51
Was the law applicable to the sale disclosed?	10%	12	90%	108	7%	4	93%	54	13%	8	87%	54
Were all contract- related disclosures made except applicable law?	1%	1	99%	119	0%	0	0	0	2%	1	98%	61

SITES THAT SOLD ONLINE BUT DELIVERED OFFLINE*												
QUESTION	TOTAL SITES = 105				DOMESTIC SITES = 56				INTERNATIONAL SITES=49			
*see survey methodology and survey terms	YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO	
	% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES		% SITES	
Were delivery terms disclosed?*	38%	40	62%	65	36%	20	64%	36	41%	20	59%	29

URL COUNT BY NON-US COUNTRY	
COUNTRY	COUNT
ANDORRA	1
ARGENTINA	2
AUSTRALIA	1
AUSTRIA	2
BRAZIL	1
CANADA	39
ENGLAND	29
FINLAND	2
FRANCE	1
GERMANY	10
HONG KONG	1
ISRAEL	1
ITALY	2
JAPAN	1
NETHERLANDS	2
SINGAPORE	2
SPAIN	3