



Office of International Affairs

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

Staff Comment of the U.S. Federal Trade Commission
to the European Commission's Public Consultation
on the Safer Internet and Online Technologies for Children

The staff of the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) appreciates the opportunity to provide the European Commission with this comment relating to the *Public Consultation on Safer Internet and Online Technologies for Children*.¹

In the United States, the Federal Trade Commission enforces a statute relating to the online collection of personal information from children under the age of 13. This law, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), was enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1998.² Pursuant to this law, the FTC issued a COPPA Rule, which went into effect in April 2000.³ COPPA imposes requirements on operators of Web sites and online services directed to children, as well as other operators with actual knowledge that they have collected personal information from children.

The COPPA Act and Rule required the FTC, within five years of the Rule's effective date, to conduct a review of the Rule's effectiveness. The review addresses the effect of COPPA's implementation on practices relating to the collection, use, and disclosure of information from children online, children's ability to obtain access to online information of their choice, and the availability of Web sites directed to children. The Act and Rule further required the FTC to submit a report to the U.S. Congress setting forth the results of its review.

The FTC staff is pleased to provide this publicly available report (attached), which the FTC submitted to the U.S. Congress in February 2007, to the European Commission.⁴ It provides a summary of the FTC's 5-year experience with COPPA's age-based data collection restrictions, and outlines the FTC's enforcement and educational efforts in this area. This

¹ This Staff Comment relates to the Public Consultation accessible at http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/public_consultation/index_en.htm. The views expressed in this comment are those of the FTC staff and do not necessarily represent the views of the Federal Trade Commission or any individual Commissioner.

² See <http://www.ftc.gov/ogc/coppa1.htm>.

³ See <http://www.ftc.gov/os/1999/10/64fr59888.pdf>.

⁴ This report is also available on the FTC Web site at http://www.ftc.gov/reports/coppa/07COPPA_Report_to_Congress.pdf.

information may be relevant as you explore the issues raised in the *Public Consultation* relating to user generated content and the effectiveness of education programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this comment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Hugh Stevenson, Deputy Director for International Consumer Protection, Office of International Affairs, Federal Trade Commission at 202-326-3511 or hstevenson@ftc.gov, or Yael Weinman, Counsel for International Consumer Protection, Office of International Affairs, Federal Trade Commission at 202-326-3748, or yweinman@ftc.gov.