[FR] Recommendation by the BVP on Advertising on Internet

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The advertising standards board (BVP), the self-regulatory body of the advertising professions, has just published a recommendation on advertising on Internet. The recommendation refers at length to the revised guidelines drawn up by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in 1998. The rules laid down by this text are aimed at both defining the limits of advertising activity and guaranteeing the legality of the content of messages circulating on the Internet.

Thus the first point concerns the identification of the advertiser origin ating an advertising message; the identity must be clear and easy to access by all Internet users. Beyond that, advertising, as for the printed press or the audiovisual media, must be distinguished from other types of information. The same applies to advertising messages circulated by e-mail.

The charges for access to a message or a service must also be transparent . If these are more than the basic price, the user must be informed clearly and in advance. Lastly, advertisers are required to respect the right of Internet users to refuse the proposals made to them on-line.

The other provisions concern the content of the advertising circulated in this way; the principles are set out here in the classic manner - advertising must be decent, honest and truthful. The text requires marketing professionals to be particularly careful that no message may be perceived as being pornographic, violent, racist or sexist. In the same way, the BVP refers to the ICC texts and to its own recommendation concerning children, and recalls that advertising aimed at children must respect ethical rules.

Lastly, the text devotes a considerable amount of space to the protection of privacy; professionals are invited to inform consumers of the use to which the data concerning them could be put and to give them the possibility of indicating that they do not wish such information to be divulged.

Recommandation "la publicité sur internet" du Bureau de vérification de la publicité, janvier 2000.

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