

The use of web bugs at home connection

[Technology](#), [Information Technology](#)



Case Study-Privacy Pressures: The Use of Web Bugs at Home Connection The use of HomeConnection's web bug violated the privacy of those who agreed to display the ads on their personal computers because there were many complaints from many irate customers (Spinello, 2002). Most of them complained of having their personal information intruded without their consent. This is mainly because the use of the web bugs enabled HomeConnection to track information from their customer's web pages through the access they had to their personal computers (Josang, Maseng & Knapskog, 2009). Though the bugs were intended to collect information regarding their promotion, most of their subscribers were not informed of the intention behind the company's venture. This therefore makes their illegal access to their subscriber's personal information a violation of their privacy rights (Chander, Gelman & Radin, 2008). The company made no deliberate efforts aimed at ensuring that their customers knew of their intention of having the bugs placed on their personal computers. This also amounted to an infringement of their personal rights leading many of them to consider cancelling their subscriptions with the company (Josang, Maseng & Knapskog, 2009). In addition, the privacy of those who click on the ads has also been violated since they are also not aware of their activities being tracked down. They also have not consented to having their personal information revealed or intruded in any manner (Chander, Gelman & Radin, 2008).

2

The web bugs have been placed on the personal computers of the subscribers of HomeConnection to gather results about an ongoing

promotion. This has however been done without neither informing nor obtaining the consent of the subscribers (Josang, Maseng & Knapskog, 2009). The subscribers have a right to opt out of the company's arrangement since it infringes on their rights by disclosing their activities (Spinello, 2002). They also have the right to refuse the web bug installation into their web pages since it could end up divulging information to intruders. The internet has a lot of criminals who are out to acquire vital personal information for the purpose of stealing finances and performing other dubious activities (Chander, Gelman & Radin, 2008). The company should have taken the initiative of informing the subscribers concerning their placement of the web bugs on their web sites. These actions would have prevented the company from receiving the complaints and threats of withdrawal they had experienced after their customers received knowledge concerning their activities and information being monitored (Spinello, 2002). The subscribers have additionally not been bound by any form of agreement that allows the company to intrude into their personal information and therefore have the liberty of opting out of this arrangement (Josang, Maseng & Knapskog, 2009).

3

Should a person displaying the ads agree to the web bug he should place a statement on his or her web site indicating that persons clicking on the ad may receive further advertisements from a number of sources. This is because the users of the web page could end up having their personal information which includes their preferences being easily accessed by intruders (Spinello, 2002). The consent of the people visiting the web sites

should be obtained to ensure that their rights are not infringed. The other sources sending advertisements to these web sites may end up obtaining information that was not intended to be revealed (Josang, Maseng & Knapskog, 2009). The people displaying the ads should therefore inform their clients of the possibility of receiving information and sharing theirs with other unintended persons (Chander, Gelman & Radin, 2008).

References

Chander, A, Gelman, L & Radin, M. J. (2008). *Securing Privacy In The Internet Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Josang, A, Maseng, T & Knapskog, S. J. (2009). *Identity And Privacy In The Internet Age: 14th Nordic Conference On Secure IT Systems, Nordsec 2009, Oslo, Norway, 14-16 October 2009, Proceedings*. New York: Springer.

Spinello, R. A. (2002). *Case Studies In Information Technology Ethics*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.