



Consumer Federation of America

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CFA JOINS INTERNATIONAL CONSUMER GROUPS IN CALLING FOR BASIC CONSUMER RIGHTS IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Washington, D.C. –According to the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD), a coalition of consumer organizations from the United States and the European Union, including the Consumer Federation of America, when people go online they encounter unreasonable restrictions, one-sided terms of use, tracking of activities without knowledge or consent, and increased vulnerability to phishing, spoofing, and hacking. In celebration of Data Protection Day on January 28, 2009 the TACD is calling for governments in the U.S. and Europe to implement basic consumer rights when people use electronic technologies such as computers, email, and the Internet.

“Issues such as net neutrality, fair use of intellectual property, and online behavioral tracking are concerns for consumers in both the United States and Europe,” said Susan Grant, CFA’s Director of Consumer, who co-chairs the TACD’s Information Society Working Group. “Data Protection Day is a good time to remind policy-makers in government and business that strong consumer rights are crucial for the continued growth of the Internet.

The basic rights outlined in the TACD’s **Charter for Consumer Rights in the Digital World** include:

- **The right to access neutral networks.** Consumers should have the freedom to access any content they choose, employ any applications they choose, and use any kind of devices they choose.
- **The right to access digital media and information.** Consumers should be able to download any kind of media they want for personal use, without being tracked or subjected to penalties.
- **The right to secure networks and services.** Security should be built in to all digital products and services. Security should be the responsibility of businesses, not consumers, and businesses must be held liable for any security failures.
- **The right to privacy and data protection.** Consumers should have control over all of their personal information. Access to services should not be made contingent on agreement by the consumer for the use of his or her data for marketing purposes.

- **The right to software interoperability.** Software programs should be able to work together to help consumers do what they want, regardless of whether they are produced by the same or different companies.
- **The right to barrier-free access and equality.** Consumers should be able to access and use technology regardless of age, education level, social status or disabilities.
- **The right to pluralistic media.** Consumers should have the freedom to use the Internet as an open forum for all kinds of media, without restriction. Consumers must be able to hear many (and any) voices online, not just those of a few big businesses.

For the text of the Charter go to

<http://www.tacd.org/cgi-bin/db.cgi?page=view&config=admin/docs.cfg&id=330>

About the TACD

The TACD was formed in 1999 to develop joint policy recommendations to the US and European governments to promote and protect the interests of individual consumers. The group meets annually to share information on emerging consumer issues and to hammer out consumer-centric positions that focus on consumers' rights to information, choice, safety and fairness in the marketplace. For more information, go to www.tacd.org.