



NETWORK NEWS

STAT-O-SPHERE

In 2007, Consumer Sentinel logged more than **800,000** new consumer and identity theft complaints. In the same year, Sentinel held over 4.3 million complaints altogether. Check out the Consumer Fraud and Identity Theft Complaint Data report:

GIVING THEM THE BUSINESS

At the FTC's request, a federal judge has ordered Bernard Fromstein and Judy Provencher to pay more than \$49 million for their role in a scheme based in Canada that duped American businesses into paying for business directories and listings they didn't order.

The two are the remaining defendants in the Datacom Marketing, Inc. case, which was part of an international effort against cross-border fraud. The default judgment bars the pair from claiming – falsely – that businesses have preexisting relationships with them or that they agreed to buy directories or listings. The case was brought with assistance from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Canada's Competition Bureau, the Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal, and the Toronto Strategic Partnership. Read more at

According to John Hallerud, an FTC attorney, “The Datacom defendants were very careful and tried to cover their trail by resolving potential complaints. We had only a few Sentinel complaints but we were able to make our cases.”

A \$26 MILLION SETTLEMENT

The marketers of a debit and credit card processing services operation have agreed to pay \$26 million to settle FTC charges that they deceived small businesses throughout the country. According to the FTC, Merchant Processing, Inc., and its affiliates falsely promised to save merchants up to thousands of dollars a year in processing fees by offering rates lower than the merchants' existing services. In addition, the Commission alleged that MPI failed to disclose fees and hid pages of fine print until after the merchants had signed contracts. Read more:

WHO'S CALLING?

As part of Operation Tele-PHONEY, the FTC unveiled “Who's Calling?” – a consumer education campaign that features a website and two short videos at [www.ftc.gov/whoscalling](#) and [www.consumer.ftc.gov/whoscalling](#). Use these resources to help people in your community recognize telemarketing fraud and know where to report it. Asking themselves these questions can help:

Who's calling - and why? If telemarketers don't tell you it's a sales call, the name of the seller, and what they're selling before they make their pitch, say “no thanks” and hang up.

What's the hurry? Fast talkers who use high pressure tactics could be hiding something. Take your time.

If it's free, why are they asking me to pay? Free is free. If you have to pay, it's not a prize or a gift. It's a purchase.

Why am I “confirming” my account information – or giving it out at all? Don't give out your account information to anyone unless you know who you are talking to and what you are buying.

What time is it? The law allows telemarketers to call only between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Isn't there a National Do Not Call Registry? Yes, and putting your number on the Registry will stop most telemarketing calls – but not all.

Consumers can report phone fraud online at [www.ftc.gov](#) or by phone at 1-877-FTC-HELP. They can report violations of the National Do Not Call Registry online at [www.ftc.gov/dnccr](#) or by phone at 1-888-382-1222. It helps if they can supply the phone number or name of the company that called, and the date of the call.

For more tips on avoiding telemarketing fraud, visit

COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, OR KUDOS

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