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Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Check Out That Privacy Policy

By Richard Lowe, Jr.

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Before you enter your name, address or any other data in that form, STOP! Wait. Don't enter anything yet. If you do, you may be giving away personal information to strangers, and you know what your mom said about talking to strangers.

Okay, back up a minute. You want to buy a new necklace for your wife at that great dot com you recently found. They require you to fill out a form first – your name, address, phone number and credit card information. They also want your email address, gender and income range.

So you know these people? Think about it for a minute. How many of your friends (even your best ones) have you told your true age or how much money you make. Have you divulged your credit card data to your co-workers at work? Perhaps you give your social security number to the kid at the McDonalds?

I didn't think so. Then why do you insist on giving this data to a faceless computer? You don't have any idea who is on the other side of the screen – yet every day you give away information that you would never dream of telling your parents or best friends.

Before typing in the information look around the site until you find a link named "privacy". Usually it is on the bottom of the home page (at least), and good sites will have a link to it from EVERY page. Click on the link and read the policy from start to finish. Make sure you understand it – if there are any words you do not understand pull out your handy dictionary and check them out. Once you are done, read it again. Slowly.

What's so important about this that it requires all this work? Look, you are giving out personal data about yourself. The web site owners have an obligation to inform how this data is going to be used.

Questions that should be answered by any decent privacy policy include:

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How do you get in contact with the owners of the company?

How do you erase your private data or remove yourself from mailing lists?

Are they going to keep your information to themselves or sell it to third parties? If so, can you stop this and how?

What are they going to do with your credit card data? How do they keep it safe?

Why do they need the information? For example, our site asks each person who signs up for an award their age. Why? Because the COPPA law does not allow us to collect information from people under 13 years old. How else are you going to ensure you are in compliance with this kind of law except to

ask?

It's very important to totally understand what they plan to do with your email address ... you don't want to get spam, after all. How do they use cookies?

Do they make use of your TCP/IP address and other similar information, and if so what is it used for? Virtually every site logs this data, but rarely is it used for anything except mass statistics and error checking.

If the site has third party advertisers, banners, web bugs, banners and so on, what similar information is available for how they use any information? This is most pertinent for cookies and TCP/IP data that is automatically logged. At the very least, their should be links to third party sites so you can look at their privacy policies also.

Are there any special relationships such as partners who use the information also? If so, how is that information shared and used? If the web site asks for information, how do they ensure that COPPA (a law which attempts to ensure that information is not gathered from minors without their parents permission) is adhered to.

Under what conditions will you receive mailings and how do you opt- in and out of them.

Once you fully understand a privacy policy you can make an intelligent decision as to whether or not you want to give these people your information.

I know it seems like a lot of work, but remember you don't know who these people are and you don't know what they will do with your information. If you read the privacy policy, you can at least understand what they will do with it.

So now, go finish ordering new jewelry for your wife. That's important.

Richard Lowe Jr. is the webmaster of Internet Tips And Secrets. This website includes over 1,000 free articles to improve your internet profits, enjoyment and knowledge.

Web Site Address:

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Claudia Arevalo–Lowe is the webmistress of Internet Tips And Secrets and Surviving Asthma. Visit her site at

Kiss (Keep It Simple Stupid)

By Rose DesRochers

Not every web surfer is going to understand lawyer talk. Most online privacy policies are written by lawyers and as a web user we don't know half of what it means. Therefore I suggest that you write a privacy policy that people can understand. Phrase your policy as a FAQ with questions like

1. Do you sell my personal information to third parties? 2. How do you secure my personal information? 3. Why do you need my information/why do I need to register? 4. Do you collect information from children? 5. What other information do you collect and how is it used? 6. What are my options to control the use of my personal information? 7. What is a cookie?

When writing your company's Privacy Policy make sure that you have covered the following topics

1. The "we collect" statement 2. If you save, share, or sell your customers' email addresses.
3. If your site uses cookies ,what information is collected with the cookie. 4. Your site's security , what steps you take to protect from hackers. 5. Coppa (Statement Regarding Children) 6. How you protect their privacy. 7. Changes to your policy 8. Links 9. Updating your information 10. Your business contact information.

My advice on writing your efficient Privacy Policy can be summed up in one word , as my husband Shawn DesRochers web developer, free lance programmer and owner of invision–graphics.com would say " Kiss" (Keep it simple stupid).

Rose DesRochers, Canada

Rose is a

published author and web columnist. She is also the founder of Today's Woman a supportive online community for men and women over 18. Their goal is to help writers succeed in the writing industry by offering a useful selection of services including author interviews, regular columns, interactive forums, and a place to share your writing for critique by your peers.

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