

ROCKET SCIENCE

Jonathan Shapiro, senior vice president and head of the company's Abacus Online Alliance, told a group of attendees at the eMarketing2000 conference hosted by C.E. Unterberg Towbin that DoubleClick would be able to find a way to operate under stricter privacy rules. "It's not rocket science," Shapiro said. "It's execution."

Shapiro's comments come in the wake of assertions by activists and at least one senator that, to protect people's privacy online, DoubleClick and other online marketers should be restricted from continuing current information-collection policies. That hasn't sat well with DoubleClick, whose president suggested last week that such restrictions would hurt the company and threaten the financial health of all Internet companies relying on advertising revenue.

As part of its strategy to help marketers finely target their advertising messages, DoubleClick is in the process of merging anonymous profiles of the online behavior of millions of Web surfers with information from its recently acquired subsidiary Abacus Direct. The company's goal is to tie as many of the anonymous online profiles as it can to its Abacus database, which details the names and off-line purchasing habits of millions of consumers.

OPTING OUT

At issue is how easily DoubleClick will be able to attach names and addresses to its anonymous online profiles. The company hopes it will be able to continue its current "opt-out" process. Under that procedure, if people register by name at a DoubleClick-affiliated site such as Alta Vista, DoubleClick can attach that name to the information it gathers from different sites and through Abacus Direct, assuming the person has been sufficiently warned and hasn't specifically refused to the arrangement, or "opted out." In contrast, the privacy bill that Sen. Robert Torricelli (D., NJ) introduced this month would prevent DoubleClick from collecting personally identifiable information unless surfers have "opted in," or specifically agreed to the arrangement.

But even if DoubleClick were required to switch from opt-in to opt-out, the company wouldn't face an insurmountable problem, according to Shapiro. "If we have to go to opt-in . . . we'll get people to opt in," he told a small group of investors at a breakout session.

Asked how the company would be able to do this, Shapiro made it sound like no big deal. "You'd do a value exchange," he said, outlining a scenario in which the company could easily get 20 online merchants with which it does business to each contribute a \$10-off to a coupon book. Then DoubleClick could use that coupon book as an incentive to have online consumers opt in. The merchants, not DoubleClick, would absorb the cost of the coupons, and consumers would benefit by receiving a \$200 value, he said.

LIFTING THE GLOOM

Shapiro's comments stand in contrast to the gloomy statements made last week by DoubleClick President Kevin Ryan who said if companies were forced to get Internet surfers to opt in, "it would be extremely hard for the Internet to be successful." Ryan may have been talking about having to get permission even to create anonymous online data, not just personally identifiable profiles.

But a reading of Torricelli's bill, as well as an FTC complaint filed by the Electronic Privacy Information Center indicates that proponents of opt-in want it only for personally identifiable information. "If there's a realistic assurance that the information col-

lected will remain anonymous and not be tied to an actual identity, there is no real need for an affirmative opt-in," says David Sobel, general counsel for EPIC.

In a further indication that opt-in isn't a life-or-death issue for DoubleClick, Shapiro said the company wouldn't have to personally identify all the now-anonymous surfers in its database before the Abacus information would be useful. What DoubleClick will be able to do, he said, is to use a sample of identifiable surfers—for whom it has personally identifiable purchasing histories and online habits—to make an educated guess at the buying habits of surfers who remain anonymous. DoubleClick believes that tactic will be possible using information from about 5 million personally identifiable Internet users—a sample size the company hopes to amass by the end of the year. So far, the company has between 100,000 and 200,000 profiles in its combined off-line-online database, Shapiro said.

But that doesn't mean the company would be ready to quit after collecting 5 million of these profiles. "We would like to, over time, learn who people are," Shapiro said.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, February 23, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,744,135,736,409.24 (Five trillion, seven hundred forty-four billion, one hundred thirty-five million, seven hundred thirty-six thousand, four hundred nine dollars and twenty-four cents).

One year ago, February 23, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,619,948,000,000 (Five trillion, six hundred nineteen billion, nine hundred forty-eight million).

Five years ago, February 23, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,837,337,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred thirty-seven billion, three hundred thirty-seven million).

Ten years ago, February 23, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$2,992,887,000,000 (Two trillion, nine hundred ninety-two billion, eight hundred eighty-seven million) which reflects a doubling of the debt—an increase of almost \$3 trillion—\$2,751,248,736,409.24 (Two trillion, seven hundred fifty-one billion, two hundred forty-eight million, seven hundred thirty-six thousand, four hundred nine dollars and twenty-four cents) during the past 10 years.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Thomas, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with

accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-7641. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Indirect Food Additives: Adhesives and Components of Coatings" (Docket No. 92F-0443), received February 17, 2000; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-7642. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medical devices; Reclassification and Codification of Neodymium; Yttrium; Aluminum: Garnet (Nd: YAG) Laser for Peripheral Iridotomy" (Docket No. 93P-0277), received February 17, 2000; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-7643. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation of an Acting Assistant Secretary for Pension and Welfare Benefits; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-7644. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report for fiscal year 1999 on the implementation of the authority and use of fees collected under the Prescription Drug User Fee Act of 1992; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-7645. A communication from the Director, Corporate Policy and research Department, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing Benefits", received February 17, 2000; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-7646. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to emergency funds made available under the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-7647. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations; 65 FR 7440; 02/15/2000" (Docket No. FEMA-7305), received February 17, 2000; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-7648. A communication from the Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System transmitting, pursuant to law, its Monetary Policy Report; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-7649. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Flood Elevation Determinations; 65 FR 7443; 02/15/2000", received February 17, 2000; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-7650. A communication from the Executive Director, Emergency Steel Guarantee Loan Board transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Loan Guarantee Decisions; Availability of Environmental Information" (RIN3003-ZA00), received February 17, 2000; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.