

ITSA ADWARE BEST PRACTICES FAQs

Q: WHAT ARE THE ITSA ADWARE BEST PRACTICES?

A: ITSA's Best Practices (BPs) constitute a position statement that advocates an ethical, non-disruptive approach to the use of adware and gives consumers choice and control over what marketing applications are on their computers. The BPs were formulated with the help of ITSA member companies and may be used by these companies in the formulation of their own adware policies. The best practices themselves can be easily found on our website.

Q: WHY DID ITSA DEVELOP THESE BEST PRACTICES?

A: ITSA decided to develop a set of adware best practices as the responsible approach to take in light of some substantial concerns that have been raised about adware. ITSA believes adware can be valuable to consumers when it contains relevant, timely information and is delivered in a way that is non-deceptive and involves the consumer's total understanding and consent. ITSA also believes in a non-paternalistic approach to adware: that is, consumers should be given an informed choice and control over whether or not they want to receive adware messages. ITSA recognizes that not all adware adheres to these principles and that's why we've drafted these recommended best practices.

Q: WHAT IS ITSA'S VIEW ABOUT HOW CONSUMERS VIEW ADWARE?

A: ITSA's member companies are careful about where they spend their advertising dollars. They've found that, when adware is delivered in the right context and at the right time, many consumers act on these ads and buy. Given the average cost of an airline ticket or hotel room, these consumers probably wouldn't be spending their money if they were annoyed or did not see value.

ITSA believes the issue is not black or white, adware or no adware. The real challenge is creating an adware environment that is ethical, non-deceptive and gives consumers choice and control. That is what ITSA is advocating.

Q: WHY IS ITSA DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN SPYWARE AND ADWARE?

A. ITSA believes there are major distinctions between spyware and adware; the former is simply unacceptable and should not be used. The latter can provide some real benefits, if used responsibly. The ITSA document points out the differences in detail – please take a look at it. ITSA rejects the use of spyware. ITSA endorses adware when ethical best practices, including meaningful notice and informed consent, are applied.

Q: WHY DID ITSA CREATE A POSITION STATEMENT FOR ITS MEMBERS?

A: While it is not within ITSA's charter as a trade organization to set standards or act as an enforcement body, ITSA felt it should issue a position statement regarding marketing software applications and has recommended a set of best practices for member companies to consider in crafting their own adware policies.

Q: ARE ITSA MEMBER COMPANIES REQUIRED TO ABIDE BY THESE RECOMMENDATIONS?

A: No. Since ITSA is not a standard-setting or enforcement body, there can be no adoption requirement. ITSA members are free to adopt their own policies on these matters, and do so. ITSA members participated in the drafting of this document and approved it. Because of their action, we assume ITSA members generally agree with the best practices and may choose, as a matter of their own business judgment, to incorporate them into their own business practices. We believe that several of our members have adopted policies that were germinated from the ITSA best practices.