

# Privacy Policy

## Consumer Media LLC Privacy Policy

Last updated on July 9, 2015

### SCOPE

This Privacy Policy applies to the Consumerist web site, Tipster application and any other web sites ("Site(s)") and applications ("apps") owned and operated by Consumer Media LLC ("Consumer Media," "we" or "us") that link to this Privacy Policy. This Privacy Policy describes how Consumer Media treats information provided or collected from you on our Sites and apps.

### YOUR CONSENT TO THIS PRIVACY POLICY

This Privacy Policy is part of the Consumer Media User Agreement (<https://consumerist.com/user-agreement/>). Please read this Privacy Policy and our User Agreement before using our Sites and apps. By using any of Consumer Media's Sites or apps that link to this Privacy Policy, you consent to the terms of this updated Privacy Policy and our User Agreement.

### INFORMATION WE COLLECT, HOW WE COLLECT IT AND HOW WE USE IT

We may collect information from our users at several points on our Sites and apps. We use the personal information you provide for the purpose for which it was collected and as otherwise disclosed in this Privacy Policy.

The information we collect falls into two main categories: (1) personal information and (2) non-personally identifying information. We also collect your IP address, which has the potential to identify you personally.

**Comments:** If you register to comment on our Sites, we collect your user name, email address and password. **Your user name and avatar (if any) together with the content of your comments are public.** We use your email address to reset your password and to communicate with you about your account and Consumer Media activities. We may also use the information you provide to contact you regarding your use of our Sites and apps or to request donations. We may collect potentially personally-identifying information like Internet Protocol (IP) addresses for logged-in

users and for users leaving comments. If your browser is set to reject cookies, you will not be able to log in to comment on Consumerist.

**Tipster:** The Tipster app enables you to submit tips and photos about consumer issues to help inform Consumerist's reporting. If you submit a tip and any photos to us via the Tipster app, we collect your first and last name, email address, and any other information included in your message or photo, which may include photo metadata such as when and where the photo was taken. We use this information to contact you about your tip. Unless otherwise indicated in our requests for tips, we post your first name or first initial to credit you as a tip source.

**Surveys:** Consumer Media may collect personal information such as your email address together with your survey responses in connection with voluntary surveys conducted via our Sites that inform our reporting and help us improve our Sites.

**Donations:** We are a nonprofit organization and, as such, accept tax-deductible donations. If you donate to us, we collect your first and last name, address, telephone number, and credit or debit card information in order to process your donation and contact you about Consumer Media activities. We share your credit or debit card information with third parties only as necessary to process your donation. We respect your time and will keep communication to a minimum.

**Email Newsletter:** If we launch an email newsletter, we may collect your email address and other personal information when you register for the newsletter. Registrants for the email newsletter will receive regular emails from us. You can opt-out of emails at any time by following the unsubscribe instructions at the bottom of the email.

**Information Collected Through Technology** When you use our Sites and apps, we and our service providers may collect information automatically, including tracking information. Information collected may include your:

- Internet Protocol (IP) address
- Browser type
- Operating system

- Mobile device type
- Domain name of your Internet service provider
- Date and time of visit
- Pages visited on the Sites
- The address of the website from which you entered the Sites.
- Referring/exit web pages

We collect this data for analytics purposes, including aggregate reporting on Site or user activity, and for personalization services. We also use this data to improve our Sites and apps and make them more rewarding for our users. From time to time, we may release non-personally identifying information in aggregate, for example, by publishing a report on trends in Site usage.

Most tracking information is collected via cookies, javascript, or other technical methods, some of which are described below.

- ***Cookies:*** We use "cookies" to store, and sometimes to track, user information in certain areas of our Sites, for example, in the Consumerist comment service. Cookies, by themselves, do not tell us your email address or other personal information unless you choose to provide this information to us. A cookie is a small amount of data that is sent to your browser from a Web server and stored on your computer's hard drive. A cookie contains a unique number that allows a Site to recognize your computer. Our Sites use temporary and persistent cookies. A temporary cookie tracks visitor activity during a session or visit and it expires when you close your browser. We use them to provide continuity for your visit as you visit web pages in our Sites. Persistent cookies allow us to keep track of your user name and password so you don't have to re-enter that information each time you visit a Site (or Site area) that requires you to sign in, for example, Consumerist's comment service. Persistent cookies can be removed by following the instructions provided in your browser's help file. You can configure your browser to reject all cookies, or to notify you. If you reject all cookies, you will not be able to use services like the Consumerist comment service that require you to "sign in."

- **Log Files:** Web servers keep log files that gather information about your use of our Sites and apps. This information may help us analyze how our Sites and apps are used. Information collected may include IP address, browser type, Internet service provider (ISP), referring/exit pages, platform type, and date/time stamp in order to enable us and/or our service providers to analyze trends, administer the Sites and apps, track users' navigation in the aggregate, and to gather broad demographic information for aggregate use.
- **Web beacons:** Our Sites and e-mails may use a variety of technical methods for tracking purposes, including Web beacons (also known as clear gifs). Web beacons are small pieces of data that are embedded in images on the pages of Web sites or emails. We use Web beacons in conjunction with cookies to compile statistics about Site usage and analyze Site traffic patterns. We also use Web beacons in HTML e-mails that we send visitors to our Sites to determine whether our recipients have opened those e-mails and/or clicked on links in those e-mails.

On their own, cookies or Web beacons do not contain or reveal any personally identifying information. However, if you choose to furnish us with personally identifying information, this information can be linked to the data stored in the cookies or Web beacons. These technical methods may involve the transmission of information either directly to us or to other parties authorized by us to collect information on our behalf.

### **Opting-Out**

The Help function on most browsers contains information on how to set your browser to notify you before accepting cookies or to disable cookies entirely or clear existing cookies. However, if you don't accept cookies, you will not be able to take advantage of certain features on our Sites, for example, you will not be able to use features like Consumerist's blog commenting platform that require you to "sign in" with a user name and password.

### **Advertising**

We accept no free samples or corporate sponsorships. We accept no outside advertising other than promotional materials from our legally affiliated organizations, which include two non-profit organizations, Consumers Union of United States, Inc., doing business as Consumer Reports, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and

Consumers Union Action Fund, Inc., a 501(c)(4) nonprofit consumer advocacy organization. These organizations do not accept outside advertising.

Consumer Reports may use cookies on our Site, for example, to advertise its products and services. Consumer Reports' use of cookies is governed by its privacy policy, which is accessible here<http://www.consumerreports.org/privacy>.

To prevent other sites from placing cookies on your computer, you will need to visit each Web site and use their cookie-removal process or set your browser cookie filter accordingly.

### **Third Party Sites and Services**

Our Sites and apps may contain links to third-party Web sites and services or may be accessible via third-party services (e.g., social media services). If you disclose your personal information to third parties, whether through our Sites or through third-party sites or services, then the privacy policies of those third parties will control any information you provide to them and will operate independently of this Privacy Policy. We are not responsible for and do not control the privacy practices or the content of those other Web sites or services operated by third parties. We encourage you to review the privacy policy of any company before submitting your personal information.

### **HOW YOUR INFORMATION WILL BE USED**

In addition to the uses described elsewhere in this Privacy Policy, we may also use your information to contact you regarding your use of our Sites and apps, to request donations to support Consumer Media's activities, and to customize your experience. We also use the information you provide to ensure compliance with our User Agreement. If you contact us for help or for additional information about a particular service, we will use the personal information you provide to reply to you. We may also use the information you provide to send you information and materials produced by us or our affiliates that we believe may be of interest to you, for example, we may send you an email about a consumer protection legislative proposal that Consumers Union Action Fund is supporting before Congress or we may send you information about how to subscribe to a Consumer Reports publication. If you prefer not to receive these types of communications, you can opt-out by following the

unsubscribe instructions included in the email communication and we will honor your request promptly.

## **SHARING YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION**

We take very seriously our responsibility to maintain your privacy with respect to your personal information. We may share your personal information with our affiliates, which include Consumer Reports, the non-profit publisher of Consumer Reports magazine and ConsumerReports.org, and Consumers Union Action Fund, Inc., the affiliate of Consumers Union that helps work for pro-consumer legislative reform. From time to time, you may receive emails from our affiliates. Except for sharing with our affiliates, and as described below, we will not share, exchange, sell or rent your email address with any other third parties. Please note that any information you post to a public area of our Sites and applications, for example, in comments to blog posts, is public.

### **Sharing with service providers**

We contract with other companies to provide certain services on our behalf, including hosting, email distribution, donation payment card processing, surveys and analytics. We provide these companies only with the information they need to perform their services. These service providers are restricted from using the personal information we provide in any way other than to provide services for us and they may not share or resell this personal information.

### **Sale of a Business**

We may purchase or establish a business or sell one or more of our businesses and your personal information may be transferred as a part of the purchase or sale, creation of a separate business to provide certain of our products and services, or sale or pledge of our assets, as well as in the event of an insolvency, bankruptcy or receivership in which personal information would be transferred as one of the business assets of Consumer Media. Information, including personal information, about Consumer Media's users of our Sites and applications may also be need to be disclosed in connection with a transaction in which Consumer Media or one of our affiliates is seeking financing, investment, support or funding. If we sell a business or engage in one of the other

types of transactions noted above, personal information will be subject to the promises made in our privacy policy in effect at the time of the transfer of that information.

**We will notify you if Consumer Media transfers ownership and control of your personally identifying information to an unaffiliated third party in connection with a substantial corporate transaction.**

### **Sharing for Legal Purposes**

We reserve the right to share your personal information with legal authorities if required by law, for example, to comply with a court order or subpoena, or if we determine in our sole discretion that it is necessary to investigate, prevent or take action regarding suspected illegal activities, any violations of our User Agreement, or in connection with any safety or security concerns.

Please be aware that if you register as a commenter on one of our Sites and a third party subsequently complains that one or more of your comments breaches our User Agreement(<https://consumerist.com/user-agreement/>)(e.g., libels them or infringes their intellectual property rights), then in accordance with our User Agreement(<https://consumerist.com/user-agreement/>), we will make reasonable efforts to contact you and alert you to the situation. If we are required to by law to disclose your contact information, we will first attempt to contact you to provide an opportunity to respond to such request.

### **Mandatory Disclosure for Certain Promotional Offers, Sweepstakes or Contests**

When you choose to enter a sweepstakes or contest or other promotion, then your participation will be governed by the terms and conditions of such promotions. Your information may be disclosed to third parties, including service providers and judges, who assist us with the promotion. We may also disclose your information if legally required to do so, for example, by posting a winner's list online and filing a winner's name, address and phone number with applicable state agencies.

### **Third-Party Use of Aggregate, Anonymous Data**

We authorize certain service providers to utilize for their business purposes and in accordance with their privacy policies aggregated, anonymous information derived from data collected when you use the products and services they support on our behalf, for

example, to report on usage or industry trends to their customer base. This information includes such anonymous, aggregated information as your browser type, screen resolution and mobile device type. We work to protect your personal information from loss, misuse or unauthorized alteration on our Sites. We have put in place appropriate physical, electronic and managerial procedures to safeguard and help prevent unauthorized access, maintain data security, and correctly use the information we collect via our Sites.

## **SECURITY**

We work to protect your personal information from loss, misuse or unauthorized alteration on our Sites. We have put in place appropriate physical, electronic and managerial procedures to safeguard and help prevent unauthorized access, maintain data security, and correctly use the information we collect via our Sites.

Keep in mind that any information you include in a message you post online in a public posting area on one of our Sites is available to anyone with Internet access. If you don't want people to know your name or other information about you, do not include it in any message you post publicly or incorporate it in a user name.

### **Security Enforcement**

Any unauthorized access to or use of our Sites or apps or the information collected and maintained by us should be immediately brought to our attention by contacting us via email to [legaldept@consumer.org](mailto:legaldept@consumer.org) or by writing to us at Consumer Media LLC Attn: Security, 101 Truman Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10703. We will investigate, and, if necessary, take action to halt any violation of the security of your personal information of which we become aware.

### **Security of Access to Your Online Account Information**

If you register to engage in certain activities on a Site, you are asked to establish a user name and password. If you forget your password, we can send you an email to the email address we have on record that allows you to reset your password. If we do not have a valid email address associated with your user name and password, then you will have to re-register if you forget your user name and password. We urge you to keep your password confidential and not disclose it to anyone. We encourage you to use strong passwords (click [here](#) for secure password guidelines from Consumer

Reports). We also recommend that you never reuse the same password across different web sites and other online products and services.

**IMPORTANT – Although we take these steps to protect your personal information, no method of transmitting or storing electronic data is ever completely secure, therefore we cannot promise or guarantee that such information will never be accessed, used or released in a manner that is inconsistent with this Privacy Policy.**

### **CHILDREN'S PRIVACY**

Our Sites and apps are oriented toward a general audience and intended for adults only. We do not knowingly request or collect information from children under age 13. If you are under age 13, please do not send us any personal information. You must be 18 or older to participate in certain activities via our Sites, such as contests.

### **INTERNATIONAL PRIVACY**

Consumer Media is a not-for-profit Delaware limited liability company headquartered in Yonkers, New York, USA. If you are located outside of the United States, the personal information you provide to us will be transferred to the United States and governed by applicable U.S. laws and regulations and this Privacy Policy. Some of this information may be transferred to, processed and stored temporarily by our service providers in other countries. By submitting your personal information, you consent to its transfer to and storage in the United States and other countries designated by Consumer Media, its governance by U.S. laws and regulations, and its use in accordance with the purposes for which it was originally collected and as set forth in this Privacy Policy.

### **CHANGES TO THIS PRIVACY POLICY**

This Privacy Policy may be amended from time to time to reflect changes in our practices, technology, Sites and applications. The most recent version of this Privacy Policy will always be posted on our Sites and apps, with such changes effective as of the "Effective Date" posted at the top of this Privacy Policy. If we make a material change in the way we use your personal information, we will provide notice to you. By continuing to use our Sites and applications after we have posted such modification or notice, you agree to the terms of the then-current Privacy Policy, provided that we will seek your consent to any changes where legally required to do so.

## **YOUR CALIFORNIA PRIVACY RIGHTS**

California Civil Code Section 1798.83 permits users of our Sites who are California residents to request certain information regarding disclosure of personal information to third parties for such third parties' direct marketing purposes. You may make such a request by writing to us at: Consumer Media LLC Attn: Consumerist – Privacy 101 Truman Avenue Yonkers, NY 10703 or emailing us at: [legaldept@consumer.org](mailto:legaldept@consumer.org). Please include your name and contact information in your request.

## **HOW TO CONTACT US ABOUT PRIVACY**

Please contact us at [legaldept@consumer.org](mailto:legaldept@consumer.org) or at the address listed above with respect to any inquiries about our Privacy Policy, our Sites or applications.

If you wish to deactivate your account, you may do so through your user profile.

## **PRIVACY POLICY COMPLIANCE**

If you feel that we have not complied with our Privacy Policy, please let us know. Additionally, you may contact your state or local consumer protection office, the Better Business Bureau, or The Federal Trade Commission, by phone at (202) FTC-HELP (202-382-4357) or online at <http://www.ftc.gov>.

## **DISPUTES**

Any disputes regarding this Privacy Policy are subject to our User Agreement.