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Microsoft Steers Clear of the Online Big-Brother Path

And defines self-regulatory approach for online privacy

In a recent move designed to protect Internet users, Microsoft has steered clear of the online Big-Brother path. Despite the fact that it plays the role of the underdog when it comes down to the online advertising market in comparison to Google, the Redmond company is aiming to make its own self-regulatory strategy of online privacy a standard. In this context, Microsoft has filed a proposal of a multi-level system designed to secure and protect consumers' privacy with the Federal Trade Commission. In this manner, Microsoft aims to essentially bring a structure to the regulation of online advertising. "We welcome the opportunity to work with the FTC to ensure that online consumers benefit from meaningful privacy protections. Online advertising should put consumers in the driver's seat, not only with the information they want to see, but also with the tools to protect their privacy," revealed Brad Smith, senior vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary, Legal & Corporate Affairs, Microsoft. According to the system proposed by the Redmond company, online advertisers will have to place control over the information they collect firmly in the hands of end users. Via a five-tier structure, Microsoft's self-regulatory approach for online privacy provide guidelines for the collection of visitor data, for the delivery of ads, for behavioral advertising, the usage of personally identifiable information and the use of sensitive personal data. Microsoft revealed that it had already applied the self-regulatory model in its Privacy Principles for Live Search and Online Ad Targeting. "Even as consumers value the benefits of online advertising, they may not fully appreciate the role data collection plays in the delivery of online advertising. Microsoft's proposed guidelines will help consumers receive relevant and helpful information while helping ensure their privacy is respected," Smith added.