



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
September 30, 2009

**Contact:** Heather Geisler  
212-419-3407  
media@stopscads.org

**NATIONAL CONSUMERS LEAGUE JOINS EFFORT TO PROTECT  
INTERNET USERS FROM DECEPTIVE ONLINE ADS**

*Recent Google Trademark Policy Changes Have  
Consumer Organizations and Brands on High Alert*

NEW YORK, NY -- The National Consumers League [NCL], a private, nonprofit advocacy group working to protect and promote social and economic justice for consumers and workers in the United States and abroad, is the newest member of the Alliance Against Bait & Click [AABC], an organization dedicated to safeguarding search and protecting internet users from deceptive online ads, also known as SCADS or scam ads. Comprised of leading e-commerce marketers and academic experts, the AABC raises awareness of “bait & click”, when consumers are lured to potentially dangerous sites by unauthorized and unaffiliated brand names.

“NCL joining AABC significantly strengthens our ability to educate Internet users of the risks posed by sponsored search results, including exposure to fraud, viruses and spyware,” said Heather Geisler, spokesperson for AABC. “We are thrilled to have NCL join in the fight against deceptive online ads.”

The National Consumers League joins fellow industry leaders including 1-800- Contacts, InterContinental Hotels Group, Hyatt Hotels and Resorts, Northwest Airlines, Rosetta Stone, ResortQuest, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, nero, Cyveillance, and Marriott International as a member of the organization.

“We believe that the issues raised by AABC are of clear concern to consumers, particularly as it relates to fraud online – an issue we are very much involved with,” said John Breyault, Vice President of Public Policy, Telecommunications and Fraud, National Consumers League. “With American Internet users averaging eight billion searches per month, the potential impact of fraud committed via sponsored search results is very large.”

Brand owners are on high alert to protect their trademarks from being used to mislead consumers. On June 15, Google implemented a new policy that allows its advertisers to use “trademark terms in their ads texts even if they do not own that trademark or have explicit approval from the trademark owner to use it.”

AABC delivered an open letter to Google expressing its concern over dishonest marketers who now have the ability to abuse the new policy and use trusted brand names to lure Internet users to deceptive websites that may sell pirated products or spread spyware or viruses. In the letter, AABC asked that Google suspend the new policy and return to its original policy of requiring unauthorized advertisers to submit such ads to brand owners in advance, so that they can help determine if a listing is deceptive in order to protect consumers from phishing, counterfeiting and other fraudulent practices.

The National Consumers League co-signed the letter with InterContinental Hotels Group, Marriott International, Hyatt Hotels and Resorts, United Airlines, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, the National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball, Collegiate Licensing Company, Hertz, 1-800-Contacts, ResortQuest, TiVo, 1-800 PetMeds, nero, Hearts on Fire and Cyveillance.

For more information on the Alliance Against Bait & Click or how to spot “scads”, please visit [www.stopscads.org](http://www.stopscads.org).

#### **ABOUT THE ALLIANCE AGAINST BAIT & CLICK**

The Alliance Against Bait & Click protects consumers from deceptive search engine marketing practices. We believe that buying & selling search terms for brands you don't have the right to use is wrong. Internet users should be able to click on an ad without worrying about being misled or getting ripped off. The impact of scads – or scam ads – spreads beyond their effect on legitimate advertisers. When a user can't trust the results of sponsored links, it erodes consumer confidence in search. Join the Alliance Against Bait & Click. Stop scads.

###