

SiteJabber.com Home | The SiteJabber Blog

Tue 2 Feb 2010

SiteJabber launches partnership with HON to help consumers find quality health websites

The deluge of health information and services moving online has been both a blessing and a curse for consumers. On one hand, consumers have access to high quality information on sites like the [Diseases and Conditions Index](#) of the National Institutes of Health and the [Consumer Portal of the Mayo Clinic](#). On the other hand, hundreds of thousands of websites have emerged offering information and services of dubious quality. Consumers are often left with the unfortunate choice of either relying on a handful of big name websites or taking a risk using an unknown site.

SiteJabber and [Health on the Net Foundation](#) (HON) would like to change this. Already, SiteJabber's very proactive community has reviewed thousands of [health websites](#), helping consumers learn from the good and bad experiences of their peers. HON is the most reputable and longest serving non-profit dedicated to the deployment of useful and reliable online medical information. HON's expert staff certifies websites based on [eight principles](#) to ensure their quality for consumers. SiteJabber will now be publishing HON seals on all websites that have received that accreditation, allowing visitors to SiteJabber to see this information alongside our community's reviews so consumers can have as much information as possible when making the decision to use a health website.

To see the partnership in action, please visit [SiteJabber's health page](#). To see the official press release please go [here](#).



Sat 16 Jan 2010

The SiteJabber FireFox Plugin – a simple but powerful way to get reviews while you surf the web

We at SiteJabber are excited about the recent release the [SiteJabber plugin](#) for FireFox. The plugin allows anyone to check for SiteJabber reviews on the site they're viewing in their browser. We've designed the plugin to keep people better informed about websites while they're using them, as well as encourage consumers to share their experiences with fellow consumers.

In the long run, we hope this plugin will make an important contribution to the improvement of transparency around the quality of websites and online businesses. Enjoy, and as always, let us know what

you think!



Thu 10 Dec 2009

FTC launches new site to educate kids about online fraud

Last week, the FTC launched [YouAreHere](#), a new site aimed at helping kids become smarter online consumers. It uses educational games to raise awareness of identity theft, false advertising, scams, and even a bit of business history. There is also a [special section](#) for parents and teachers encouraging them to use the site as an education tool.

The site is an admirable attempt to use technology to keep kids safe online; what remains to be seen is how many children really use and learn from YouAreHere. In the meantime, you too can learn about the [pros and cons of corporate M&A](#) from a blue fellow without a nose.



Sun 25 Oct 2009

Avoid sites selling H1N1 (swine flu) treatments

The US Food and Drug Administration recently [warned consumers](#) against sites selling H1N1 treatments. Sites have been reported to be selling everything from counterfeit Tamiflu to herbal swine flu remedies that have little grounding in medical science. In addition to the threat to consumers of receiving impure or otherwise harmful unproven treatments, the US government is concerned consumers will believe themselves to be protected by whatever they purchase from these fraudulent sites and not take recommended H1N1 prevention measures (such as getting the H1N1 vaccine and practicing the good hygiene tips recommended by the CDC).

While there are some legitimate [online pharmacy sites](#) that have been reviewed on SiteJabber, we strongly recommend against purchasing H1N1 treatments online. Please ask your physician for more information, or visit the [CDC's H1N1 information page](#).



Tue 20 Oct 2009

Online Teeth Whitening Scams

The pitch is familiar: “Get whiter teeth – free trial!” Unfortunately, many websites making these promises are engaging in deceptive marketing, trying to bait unsuspecting consumers with “free trials” that seamlessly segue in expensive auto-renewing subscriptions. According to [Wired](#), the Utah state consumer protection department has begun to [investigate](#) and crack down on some of these teeth whitening companies.

On SiteJabber, our members have seen their share of bad [teeth whitening websites](#), with numerous negative reviews of sites like [CleanWhites.com](#) and [DazzleSmilePro.com](#). Our recommendation: avoid websites that promise teeth whitening free trials, ask your dentist for recommendations, and if you do buy online, read the terms and conditions carefully.

DazzleSmile!
Home whitening has been seen on: [ABC](#) [CNN.com](#) [AOL](#) [FOX](#)

Smile Like A Celebrity Superstar!

Congratulations!
You and the next 196 CUSTOMERS will receive a discount shipping price of \$2.95!
Offer Valid Today!

We're holding a package JUST FOR YOU.
Please complete this within 3:59 Minutes,
Within 3:59 Minutes, we can guarantee YOUR TRIAL.

Choose a package:	Qty:	Today You Pay
1 Package of Dazzle Smile	1	\$0.00
World Club Fitness Trial	1	\$0.00
Please enter your promo code:		
<input type="button" value="Apply"/>	Shipping	\$2.95
	Subtotal:	\$2.95

Your shipment is estimated to arrive on Oct 23, 2009

HURRY! TRIALS ARE GOING FAST!

- ✓ No Expensive Lasers
- ✓ No Awkward Strips
- ✓ No Bad Tasting Gels

Payment Information

Please note: We only accept credit cards.

Card Type:

Card Number:

Expiration: /

Security code:

SEND MY TRIAL HERE
Send My DazzleSmile!

NOTE: SUPPLIES GOING VERY FAST. LIMIT 1 ORDER PER CUSTOMER.

Thu 15 Oct 2009

Online retailers and differential pricing – consumers be wary

The Times of London recently [reported](#) the UK's [Office of Fair Trading](#) is investigating the differential pricing tactics of online retailers. Differential pricing typically involves retailers collecting information about their registered customers in order to determine a customer's “willingness to pay” for a particular product or service. Based on that data the retailer may then charge certain customers more than others if the retailer believes the customer will still make the purchase at the higher price.

While the legality of such practices is unclear, (Amazon has been [reported](#) to do this as well) differential pricing leaves most consumers, at a minimum, with a bad taste in their mouth. A classic example of this was [Coke's plan](#) to make vending machines that would charge different prices for sodas based on the ambient temperature, exploiting the idea that cold sodas are worth more to people when it's warm outside. Unsurprisingly, many consumers did not take well to this and Coke abandoned the project.

For consumers, the most important issue here is likely transparency. If a website engages in differential pricing, consumers interacting with the site should be informed *ex-ante* – before they register or make a purchase. As it seems unlikely websites will do this voluntarily, it may be up to governments and watchdog groups to bring website pricing practices to the fore. Here on SiteJabber, perhaps some of our [community members](#) can do a bit of investigative research and see if we can't root out and let consumers know about some of the sites that practice price discrimination.

The logo for TIMESONLINE, with 'TIMES' in black and 'ONLINE' in green, all in a bold, sans-serif font, enclosed in a thin blue border.

Wed 7 Oct 2009

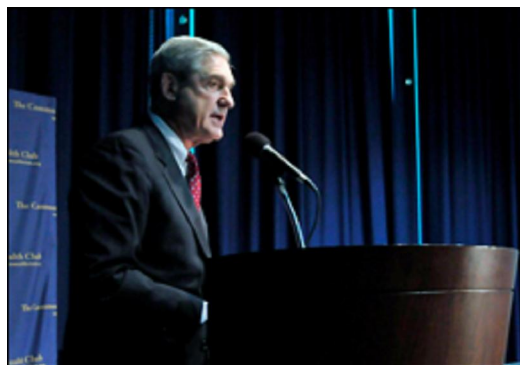
[FBI arrests 100 in phishing scam round-up](#)

[Phishing](#) – the criminal practice of fraudulently acquiring sensitive information online such as passwords, credit card info, social security numbers, etc. – caused some 3.6 million people to suffer \$3.2 billion in damages in 2007. Today, the [FBI announced](#) they have charged 100 people in connection with a phishing ring which spanned the Atlantic. Arrests were made in Los Angeles and Egypt.

However, the real story here is not the arrests. What's more interesting is that the FBI appears to be losing ground in its uphill battle to curb online crime. As Chet Wisniewski, senior security advisor at Sophos, a Web security firm noted in the [New York Times coverage](#), "I would imagine there are many different groups doing similar things...you squash one bug and another one emerges." Gartner [reported](#) earlier this year more than 5 million consumers lost money to phishing attacks in the 12 months ending in September 2008 – a 40% increase from the previous year.

To be sure, it's hard to blame the FBI. It's a large bureaucracy with a broad purview and limited resources. Online fraudsters and phishers are clever, nimble, plentiful, and preponderant. What's needed here is a new solution that taps the real-time web (real-time phishing reports?) and social media (automated phishing news alerts on social networks for at-risk individuals?). SiteJabber has a small area dedicated to reviewing [phishing](#) scams associated with websites, but we too could do much more to help (all suggestions are welcome: Jeremy at SiteJabber dot com).

Additional phishing resources can be found at [Onguard.gov](#) and through the [FTC](#).



Director Robert Mueller talking about Phish Phry in California today

Tue 29 Sep 2009

Bad reviews boost sales

Today in [CNN Money](#) there was a good piece on how [consumer reviews](#) boost sales even if reviews are negative. Jacqueline Anderson of Forrester research points out the value of bad reviews to business owners, “If everything is positive, that raises a red flag among consumers.”



Thu 6 Aug 2009

Impact of bad reviews on online businesses and websites

Thousands of online businesses and websites have been [reviewed](#) on SiteJabber. While many reviews are positive, there are also the negative reviews – consumers who received [defective merchandise](#), felt wronged by [bad customer service](#), discovered that website content is inaccurate or [deceptive](#), and so on. As a consequence, we receive a lot of understandably angry emails from the owners of websites saying, “These bad reviews are untrue,” “Someone is just out to get me,” and so on, asking us to remove the negative reviews. And some of these website owners may be right, but, despite that, it is our policy not to remove reviews because we strongly believe in the long run, everyone is better off if these views are heard. This belief is based on several assumptions we hold to be truths:

- 1) For every unhappy customer, a good website will have many times as many happy customers and this will eventually be reflected in the reviews on SiteJabber
- 2) Consumers are smart. They know even the best businesses and sites will have detractors, and they take negative reviews as just a single data point.

3) Negative reviews can provide useful data for site owners to improve the services they provide, leading to more positive reviews, and eventually more business

This topic was covered recently in a piece by [Forbes](#), which points out that bad reviews can help business owners improve products, build customer trust, and even properly set customer expectations as to reduce requests for refunds. So to all the online business and website owners out there, we ask for your patience. Even if you've had a few bad reviews which you consider unfair, if you run a good site, people will take notice, and you will win in the end.

Wed 29 Jul 2009

[**New York Attorney General Puts a Price on Falsified Reviews**](#)



Wherever reviews are present, there is always a risk that some have been faked by someone affiliated with whatever is being reviewed. This practice of “[astroturfing](#)” has become increasingly prevalent online and stands as an obstacle between consumers and the trustworthy information they need to make informed decisions.

However, earlier this month, New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo gave consumers a [victory](#) in this fight. Cuomo secured a \$300,000 settlement with Lifestyle Lift, a New York plastic surgery chain, for publishing anonymous positive reviews about the company. Lifestyle Lift further agreed to, “not promote Lifestyle Lift’s services on the Internet without clearly and conspicuously disclosing that they are responsible for the content.”

Consumers and the cause of online transparency should benefit from this settlement as it will hopefully act as a deterrent to other companies who might seek to create false positive reviews online, lest they be dragged to court and fined similarly.

Here at SiteJabber, we often receive emails from online businesses and websites who are clearly concerned about how negative reviews (and a lack of positive reviews) will affect their business. It is [our belief](#), and I think it is underscored by this settlement, that online businesses and websites are best served by being patient and providing the best quality services possible to their customers. Online consumers are smart and write more positive reviews of good sites than a site could ever hope to write itself; and even if good reviews are faked, dissatisfied customers will come forward and expose the true nature of the business or site. Transparency always wins in the end.

[Next Page »](#)

• **Links**

○

[SiteJabber homepage](#)

[Review or complain about an online business or website](#)

[Evaluating online businesses & websites](#)

[Reporting online fraud & scams](#)

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• Recent Posts

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- [SiteJabber launches partnership with HON to help consumers find quality health websites](#)
- [The SiteJabber FireFox Plugin – a simple but powerful way to get reviews while you surf the web](#)
- [FTC launches new site to educate kids about online fraud](#)
- [Avoid sites selling H1N1 \(swine flu\) treatments](#)
- [Online Teeth Whitening Scams](#)