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15 USC Ch. 103: CONTROLLING THE ASSAULT OF NON-SOLICITED PORNOGRAPHY AND MARKETING

From Title 15—COMMERCE AND TRADE

CHAPTER 103—CONTROLLING THE ASSAULT OF NON-SOLICITED PORNOGRAPHY AND MARKETING

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§7701. Congressional findings and policy

(a) Findings

The Congress finds the following:

(1) Electronic mail has become an extremely important and popular means of communication, relied on by millions of Americans on a daily basis for personal and commercial purposes. Its low cost and global reach make it extremely convenient and efficient, and offer unique opportunities for the development and growth of frictionless commerce.

(2) The convenience and efficiency of electronic mail are threatened by the extremely rapid growth in the volume of unsolicited commercial electronic mail. Unsolicited commercial electronic mail is currently estimated to account for over half of all electronic mail traffic, up from an estimated 7 percent in 2001, and the volume continues to rise. Most of these messages are fraudulent or deceptive in one or more respects.

(3) The receipt of unsolicited commercial electronic mail may result in costs to recipients who cannot refuse to accept such mail and who incur costs for the storage of such mail, or for the time spent accessing, reviewing, and discarding such mail, or for both.

(4) The receipt of a large number of unwanted messages also decreases the convenience of electronic mail and creates a risk that wanted electronic mail messages, both commercial and noncommercial, will be lost, overlooked, or discarded amidst the larger volume of unwanted messages, thus reducing the reliability and usefulness of electronic mail to the recipient.

(5) Some commercial electronic mail contains material that many recipients may consider vulgar or pornographic in nature.

(6) The growth in unsolicited commercial electronic mail imposes significant monetary costs on providers of Internet access services, businesses, and educational and nonprofit institutions that carry and receive such mail, as there is a finite volume of mail that such providers, businesses, and institutions can handle without further investment in infrastructure.

(7) Many senders of unsolicited commercial electronic mail purposefully disguise the source of such mail.

(8) Many senders of unsolicited commercial electronic mail purposefully include misleading information in the messages' subject lines in order to induce the recipients to view the messages.

(9) While some senders of commercial electronic mail messages provide simple and reliable ways for recipients to reject (or "opt-out" of) receipt of commercial electronic mail from such senders in the future, other senders provide no such "opt-out" mechanism, or refuse to

honor the requests of recipients not to receive electronic mail from such senders in the future, or both.

(10) Many senders of bulk unsolicited commercial electronic mail use computer programs to gather large numbers of electronic mail addresses on an automated basis from Internet websites or online services where users must post their addresses in order to make full use of the website or service.

(11) Many States have enacted legislation intended to regulate or reduce unsolicited commercial electronic mail, but these statutes impose different standards and requirements. As a result, they do not appear to have been successful in addressing the problems associated with unsolicited commercial electronic mail, in part because, since an electronic mail address does not specify a geographic location, it can be extremely difficult for law-abiding businesses to know with which of these disparate statutes they are required to comply.

(12) The problems associated with the rapid growth and abuse of unsolicited commercial electronic mail cannot be solved by Federal legislation alone. The development and adoption of technological approaches and the pursuit of cooperative efforts with other countries will be necessary as well.

(b) Congressional determination of public policy

On the basis of the findings in subsection (a), the Congress determines that—

(1) there is a substantial government interest in regulation of commercial electronic mail on a nationwide basis;

(2) senders of commercial electronic mail should not mislead recipients as to the source or content of such mail; and

(3) recipients of commercial electronic mail have a right to decline to receive additional commercial electronic mail from the same source.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §2, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699.)

Effective Date

Pub. L. 108–187, §16, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2719, provided that: "The provisions of this Act [see Short Title note below], other than section 9 [enacting section 7708 of this title], shall take effect on January 1, 2004."

Short Title

Pub. L. 108–187, §1, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699, provided that: "This Act [enacting this chapter and section 1037 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, amending section 227 of Title 47, Telecommunications, and enacting provisions listed in a table relating to sentencing guidelines set out as a note under section 994 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure] may be cited as the 'Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003', or the 'CAN-SPAM Act of 2003'."

§7702. Definitions

In this chapter:

(1) Affirmative consent

The term "affirmative consent", when used with respect to a commercial electronic mail message, means that—

(A) the recipient expressly consented to receive the message, either in response to a clear and conspicuous request for such consent or at the recipient's own initiative; and

(B) if the message is from a party other than the party to which the recipient communicated such consent, the recipient was given clear and conspicuous notice at the time the consent was communicated that the recipient's electronic mail address could be transferred to such other party for the purpose of initiating commercial electronic mail messages.

(2) Commercial electronic mail message

(A) In general

The term "commercial electronic mail message" means any electronic mail message the primary purpose of which is the commercial advertisement or promotion of a commercial product or service (including content on an Internet website operated for a commercial purpose).

(B) Transactional or relationship messages

The term "commercial electronic mail message" does not include a transactional or relationship message.

(C) Regulations regarding primary purpose

Not later than 12 months after December 16, 2003, the Commission shall issue regulations pursuant to section 7711 of this title defining the relevant criteria to facilitate the determination of the primary purpose of an electronic mail message.

(D) Reference to company or website

The inclusion of a reference to a commercial entity or a link to the website of a commercial entity in an electronic mail message does not, by itself, cause such message to be treated as a commercial electronic mail message for purposes of this chapter if the contents or circumstances of the message indicate a primary purpose other than commercial advertisement or promotion of a commercial product or service.

(3) Commission

The term "Commission" means the Federal Trade Commission.

(4) Domain name

The term "domain name" means any alphanumeric designation which is registered with or assigned by any domain name registrar, domain name registry, or other domain name registration authority as part of an electronic address on the Internet.

(5) Electronic mail address

The term "electronic mail address" means a destination, commonly expressed as a string of characters, consisting of a unique user name or mailbox (commonly referred to as the "local part") and a reference to an Internet domain (commonly referred to as the "domain part"), whether or not displayed, to which an electronic mail message can be sent or delivered.

(6) Electronic mail message

The term "electronic mail message" means a message sent to a unique electronic mail address.

(7) FTC Act

The term "FTC Act" means the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.).

(8) Header information

The term "header information" means the source, destination, and routing information attached to an electronic mail message, including the originating domain name and originating electronic mail address, and any other information that appears in the line identifying, or purporting to identify, a person initiating the message.

(9) Initiate

The term "initiate", when used with respect to a commercial electronic mail message, means to originate or transmit such message or to procure the origination or transmission of such message, but shall not include actions that constitute routine conveyance of such message. For purposes of this paragraph, more than one person may be considered to have initiated a message.

(10) Internet

The term "Internet" has the meaning given that term in the Internet Tax Freedom Act (47 U.S.C. 151 nt).

(11) Internet access service

The term "Internet access service" has the meaning given that term in section 231(e)(4) of title 47.

(12) Procure

The term "procure", when used with respect to the initiation of a commercial electronic mail message, means intentionally to pay or provide other consideration to, or induce, another person to initiate such a message on one's behalf.

(13) Protected computer

The term "protected computer" has the meaning given that term in section 1030(e)(2)(B) of title 18.

(14) Recipient

The term "recipient", when used with respect to a commercial electronic mail message, means an authorized user of the electronic mail address to which the message was sent or delivered. If a recipient of a commercial electronic mail message has one or more electronic mail addresses in addition to the address to which the message was sent or delivered, the recipient shall be treated as a separate recipient with respect to each such address. If an electronic mail address is reassigned to a new user, the new user shall not be treated as a recipient of any commercial electronic mail message sent or delivered to that address before it was reassigned.

(15) Routine conveyance

The term "routine conveyance" means the transmission, routing, relaying, handling, or storing, through an automatic technical process, of an electronic mail message for which another person has identified the recipients or provided the recipient addresses.

(16) Sender

(A) In general

Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term "sender", when used with respect to a commercial electronic mail message, means a person who initiates such a message and whose product, service, or Internet web site is advertised or promoted by the message.

(B) Separate lines of business or divisions

If an entity operates through separate lines of business or divisions and holds itself out to the recipient throughout the message as that particular line of business or division rather than as the entity of which such line of business or division is a part, then the line of business or the division shall be treated as the sender of such message for purposes of this chapter.

(17) Transactional or relationship message

(A) In general

The term "transactional or relationship message" means an electronic mail message the primary purpose of which is—

- (i) to facilitate, complete, or confirm a commercial transaction that the recipient has previously agreed to enter into with the sender;
- (ii) to provide warranty information, product recall information, or safety or security information with respect to a commercial product or service used or purchased by the recipient;
- (iii) to provide—
 - (I) notification concerning a change in the terms or features of;
 - (II) notification of a change in the recipient's standing or status with respect to; or
 - (III) at regular periodic intervals, account balance information or other type of account statement with respect to,

a subscription, membership, account, loan, or comparable ongoing commercial relationship involving the ongoing purchase or use by the recipient of products or services offered by the sender;

- (iv) to provide information directly related to an employment relationship or related benefit plan in which the recipient is currently involved, participating, or enrolled; or
- (v) to deliver goods or services, including product updates or upgrades, that the recipient is entitled to receive under the terms of a transaction that the recipient has previously agreed to enter into with the sender.

(B) Modification of definition

The Commission by regulation pursuant to section 7711 of this title may modify the definition in subparagraph (A) to expand or contract the categories of messages that are treated as transactional or relationship messages for purposes of this chapter to the extent

that such modification is necessary to accommodate changes in electronic mail technology or practices and accomplish the purposes of this chapter.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §3, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2700.)

References in Text

This chapter, referred to in text, was in the original "this Act", meaning Pub. L. 108–187, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7701 of this title and Tables.

The Federal Trade Commission Act, referred to in par. (7), is act Sept. 26, 1914, ch. 311, 38 Stat. 717, as amended, which is classified generally to subchapter I (§41 et seq.) of chapter 2 of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 58 of this title and Tables.

The Internet Tax Freedom Act, referred to in par. (10), is title XI of Pub. L. 105–277, div. C, Oct. 21, 1998, 112 Stat. 2681–719, which is set out as a note under section 151 of Title 47, Telecommunications.

Effective Date

Section effective Jan. 1, 2004, see section 16 of Pub. L. 108–187, set out as a note under section 7701 of this title.

§7703. Prohibition against predatory and abusive commercial e-mail

(a) Omitted

(b) United States Sentencing Commission

(1) Directive

Pursuant to its authority under section 994(p) of title 28 and in accordance with this section, the United States Sentencing Commission shall review and, as appropriate, amend the sentencing guidelines and policy statements to provide appropriate penalties for violations of section 1037 of title 18, as added by this section, and other offenses that may be facilitated by the sending of large quantities of unsolicited electronic mail.

(2) Requirements

In carrying out this subsection, the Sentencing Commission shall consider providing sentencing enhancements for—

(A) those convicted under section 1037 of title 18 who—

(i) obtained electronic mail addresses through improper means, including—

(I) harvesting electronic mail addresses of the users of a website, proprietary service, or other online public forum operated by another person, without the authorization of such person; and

(II) randomly generating electronic mail addresses by computer; or

(ii) knew that the commercial electronic mail messages involved in the offense contained or advertised an Internet domain for which the registrant of the domain had provided false registration information; and

(B) those convicted of other offenses, including offenses involving fraud, identity theft, obscenity, child pornography, and the sexual exploitation of children, if such offenses involved the sending of large quantities of electronic mail.

(c) Sense of Congress

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) Spam has become the method of choice for those who distribute pornography, perpetrate fraudulent schemes, and introduce viruses, worms, and Trojan horses into personal and business computer systems; and

(2) the Department of Justice should use all existing law enforcement tools to investigate and prosecute those who send bulk commercial e-mail to facilitate the commission of Federal crimes, including the tools contained in chapters 47 and 63 of title 18 (relating to fraud and false statements); chapter 71 of title 18 (relating to obscenity); chapter 110 of title 18 (relating to the sexual exploitation of children); and chapter 95 of title 18 (relating to racketeering), as appropriate.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §4, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2703.)

Codification

Section is comprised of section 4 of Pub. L. 108–187. Subsec. (a) of section 4 of Pub. L. 108–187 enacted section 1037 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, and amended analysis for chapter 47 of Title 18. The provisions of subsec. (b) of section 4 of Pub. L. 108–187 are also listed in a table relating to sentencing guidelines set out as a note under section 994 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure.

Effective Date

Section effective Jan. 1, 2004, see section 16 of Pub. L. 108–187, set out as a note under section 7701 of this title.

§7704. Other protections for users of commercial electronic mail

(a) Requirements for transmission of messages

(1) Prohibition of false or misleading transmission information

It is unlawful for any person to initiate the transmission, to a protected computer, of a commercial electronic mail message, or a transactional or relationship message, that contains, or is accompanied by, header information that is materially false or materially misleading. For purposes of this paragraph—

(A) header information that is technically accurate but includes an originating electronic mail address, domain name, or Internet Protocol address the access to which for purposes of initiating the message was obtained by means of false or fraudulent pretenses or representations shall be considered materially misleading;

(B) a "from" line (the line identifying or purporting to identify a person initiating the message) that accurately identifies any person who initiated the message shall not be considered materially false or materially misleading; and

(C) header information shall be considered materially misleading if it fails to identify accurately a protected computer used to initiate the message because the person initiating the message knowingly uses another protected computer to relay or retransmit the message for purposes of disguising its origin.

(2) Prohibition of deceptive subject headings

It is unlawful for any person to initiate the transmission to a protected computer of a commercial electronic mail message if such person has actual knowledge, or knowledge fairly implied on the basis of objective circumstances, that a subject heading of the message would be likely to mislead a recipient, acting reasonably under the circumstances, about a material fact regarding the contents or subject matter of the message (consistent with the criteria used in enforcement of section 45 of this title).

(3) Inclusion of return address or comparable mechanism in commercial electronic mail

(A) In general

It is unlawful for any person to initiate the transmission to a protected computer of a commercial electronic mail message that does not contain a functioning return electronic mail address or other Internet-based mechanism, clearly and conspicuously displayed, that—

(i) a recipient may use to submit, in a manner specified in the message, a reply electronic mail message or other form of Internet-based communication requesting not to receive future commercial electronic mail messages from that sender at the electronic mail address where the message was received; and

(ii) remains capable of receiving such messages or communications for no less than 30 days after the transmission of the original message.

(B) More detailed options possible

The person initiating a commercial electronic mail message may comply with subparagraph (A)(i) by providing the recipient a list or menu from which the recipient may choose the specific types of commercial electronic mail messages the recipient wants to receive or does not want to receive from the sender, if the list or menu includes an option under which the recipient may choose not to receive any commercial electronic mail messages from the sender.

(C) Temporary inability to receive messages or process requests

A return electronic mail address or other mechanism does not fail to satisfy the requirements of subparagraph (A) if it is unexpectedly and temporarily unable to receive messages or process requests due to a technical problem beyond the control of the sender if the problem is corrected within a reasonable time period.

(4) Prohibition of transmission of commercial electronic mail after objection

(A) In general

If a recipient makes a request using a mechanism provided pursuant to paragraph (3) not to receive some or any commercial electronic mail messages from such sender, then it is unlawful—

- (i) for the sender to initiate the transmission to the recipient, more than 10 business days after the receipt of such request, of a commercial electronic mail message that falls within the scope of the request;

- (ii) for any person acting on behalf of the sender to initiate the transmission to the recipient, more than 10 business days after the receipt of such request, of a commercial electronic mail message with actual knowledge, or knowledge fairly implied on the basis of objective circumstances, that such message falls within the scope of the request;

- (iii) for any person acting on behalf of the sender to assist in initiating the transmission to the recipient, through the provision or selection of addresses to which the message will be sent, of a commercial electronic mail message with actual knowledge, or knowledge fairly implied on the basis of objective circumstances, that such message would violate clause (i) or (ii); or

- (iv) for the sender, or any other person who knows that the recipient has made such a request, to sell, lease, exchange, or otherwise transfer or release the electronic mail address of the recipient (including through any transaction or other transfer involving mailing lists bearing the electronic mail address of the recipient) for any purpose other than compliance with this chapter or other provision of law.

(B) Subsequent affirmative consent

A prohibition in subparagraph (A) does not apply if there is affirmative consent by the recipient subsequent to the request under subparagraph (A).

(5) Inclusion of identifier, opt-out, and physical address in commercial electronic mail

(A) It is unlawful for any person to initiate the transmission of any commercial electronic mail message to a protected computer unless the message provides—

- (i) clear and conspicuous identification that the message is an advertisement or solicitation;

- (ii) clear and conspicuous notice of the opportunity under paragraph (3) to decline to receive further commercial electronic mail messages from the sender; and

- (iii) a valid physical postal address of the sender.

(B) Subparagraph (A)(i) does not apply to the transmission of a commercial electronic mail message if the recipient has given prior affirmative consent to receipt of the message.

(6) Materially

For purposes of paragraph (1), the term "materially", when used with respect to false or misleading header information, includes the alteration or concealment of header information in a manner that would impair the ability of an Internet access service processing the message on behalf of a recipient, a person alleging a violation of this section, or a law enforcement agency to identify, locate, or respond to a person who initiated the electronic mail message or to investigate the alleged violation, or the ability of a recipient of the message to respond to a person who initiated the electronic message.

(b) Aggravated violations relating to commercial electronic mail

(1) Address harvesting and dictionary attacks

(A) In general

It is unlawful for any person to initiate the transmission, to a protected computer, of a commercial electronic mail message that is unlawful under subsection (a), or to assist in the origination of such message through the provision or selection of addresses to which the message will be transmitted, if such person had actual knowledge, or knowledge fairly implied on the basis of objective circumstances, that—

(i) the electronic mail address of the recipient was obtained using an automated means from an Internet website or proprietary online service operated by another person, and such website or online service included, at the time the address was obtained, a notice stating that the operator of such website or online service will not give, sell, or otherwise transfer addresses maintained by such website or online service to any other party for the purposes of initiating, or enabling others to initiate, electronic mail messages; or

(ii) the electronic mail address of the recipient was obtained using an automated means that generates possible electronic mail addresses by combining names, letters, or numbers into numerous permutations.

(B) Disclaimer

Nothing in this paragraph creates an ownership or proprietary interest in such electronic mail addresses.

(2) Automated creation of multiple electronic mail accounts

It is unlawful for any person to use scripts or other automated means to register for multiple electronic mail accounts or online user accounts from which to transmit to a protected computer, or enable another person to transmit to a protected computer, a commercial electronic mail message that is unlawful under subsection (a).

(3) Relay or retransmission through unauthorized access

It is unlawful for any person knowingly to relay or retransmit a commercial electronic mail message that is unlawful under subsection (a) from a protected computer or computer network that such person has accessed without authorization.

(c) Supplementary rulemaking authority

The Commission shall by regulation, pursuant to section 7711 of this title—

(1) modify the 10-business-day period under subsection (a)(4)(A) or subsection (a)(4)(B), or both, if the Commission determines that a different period would be more reasonable after taking into account—

(A) the purposes of subsection (a);

(B) the interests of recipients of commercial electronic mail; and

(C) the burdens imposed on senders of lawful commercial electronic mail; and

(2) specify additional activities or practices to which subsection (b) applies if the Commission determines that those activities or practices are contributing substantially to the proliferation of commercial electronic mail messages that are unlawful under subsection (a).

(d) Requirement to place warning labels on commercial electronic mail containing sexually oriented material

(1) In general

No person may initiate in or affecting interstate commerce the transmission, to a protected computer, of any commercial electronic mail message that includes sexually oriented material and—

(A) fail to include in subject heading for the electronic mail message the marks or notices prescribed by the Commission under this subsection; or

(B) fail to provide that the matter in the message that is initially viewable to the recipient, when the message is opened by any recipient and absent any further actions by the recipient, includes only—

(i) to the extent required or authorized pursuant to paragraph (2), any such marks or notices;

(ii) the information required to be included in the message pursuant to subsection (a)(5); and

(iii) instructions on how to access, or a mechanism to access, the sexually oriented material.

(2) Prior affirmative consent

Paragraph (1) does not apply to the transmission of an electronic mail message if the recipient has given prior affirmative consent to receipt of the message.

(3) Prescription of marks and notices

Not later than 120 days after December 16, 2003, the Commission in consultation with the Attorney General shall prescribe clearly identifiable marks or notices to be included in or associated with commercial electronic mail that contains sexually oriented material, in order to inform the recipient of that fact and to facilitate filtering of such electronic mail. The Commission shall publish in the Federal Register and provide notice to the public of the marks or notices prescribed under this paragraph.

(4) Definition

In this subsection, the term "sexually oriented material" means any material that depicts sexually explicit conduct (as that term is defined in section 2256 of title 18), unless the depiction constitutes a small and insignificant part of the whole, the remainder of which is not primarily devoted to sexual matters.

(5) Penalty

Whoever knowingly violates paragraph (1) shall be fined under title 18, or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §5, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2706.)

References in Text

This chapter, referred to in subsec. (a)(4)(A)(iv), was in the original "this Act", meaning [Pub. L. 108–187, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699](#), which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7701 of this title and Tables.

Effective Date

Section effective Jan. 1, 2004, see section 16 of Pub. L. 108–187, set out as a note under section 7701 of this title.

§7705. Businesses knowingly promoted by electronic mail with false or misleading transmission information

(a) In general

It is unlawful for a person to promote, or allow the promotion of, that person's trade or business, or goods, products, property, or services sold, offered for sale, leased or offered for lease, or otherwise made available through that trade or business, in a commercial electronic mail message the transmission of which is in violation of section 7704(a)(1) of this title if that person—

(1) knows, or should have known in the ordinary course of that person's trade or business, that the goods, products, property, or services sold, offered for sale, leased or offered for lease, or otherwise made available through that trade or business were being promoted in such a message;

(2) received or expected to receive an economic benefit from such promotion; and

(3) took no reasonable action—

(A) to prevent the transmission; or

(B) to detect the transmission and report it to the Commission.

(b) Limited enforcement against third parties

(1) In general

Except as provided in paragraph (2), a person (hereinafter referred to as the "third party") that provides goods, products, property, or services to another person that violates subsection (a) shall not be held liable for such violation.

(2) Exception

Liability for a violation of subsection (a) shall be imputed to a third party that provides goods, products, property, or services to another person that violates subsection (a) if that third party—

(A) owns, or has a greater than 50 percent ownership or economic interest in, the trade or business of the person that violated subsection (a); or

(B)(i) has actual knowledge that goods, products, property, or services are promoted in a commercial electronic mail message the transmission of which is in violation of section 7704(a)(1) of this title; and

(ii) receives, or expects to receive, an economic benefit from such promotion.

(c) Exclusive enforcement by FTC

Subsections (f) and (g) of section 7706 of this title do not apply to violations of this section.

(d) Savings provision

Except as provided in section 7706(f)(8) of this title, nothing in this section may be construed to limit or prevent any action that may be taken under this chapter with respect to any violation of any other section of this chapter.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §6, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2710.)

References in Text

This chapter, referred to in subsec. (d), was in the original "this Act", meaning Pub. L. 108–187, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7701 of this title and Tables.

Effective Date

Section effective Jan. 1, 2004, see section 16 of Pub. L. 108–187, set out as a note under section 7701 of this title.

§7706. Enforcement generally

(a) Violation is unfair or deceptive act or practice

Except as provided in subsection (b), this chapter shall be enforced by the Commission as if the violation of this chapter were an unfair or deceptive act or practice proscribed under section 18(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 57a(a)(1)(B)).

(b) Enforcement by certain other agencies

Compliance with this chapter shall be enforced—

(1) under section 8 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1818), in the case of—

(A) national banks, and Federal branches and Federal agencies of foreign banks, by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency;

(B) member banks of the Federal Reserve System (other than national banks), branches and agencies of foreign banks (other than Federal branches, Federal agencies, and insured State branches of foreign banks), commercial lending companies owned or controlled by foreign banks, organizations operating under section 25 or 25A of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 601 and 611), and bank holding companies, by the Board;

(C) banks insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (other than members of the Federal Reserve System) and insured State branches of foreign banks, by the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; and

(D) savings associations the deposits of which are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, by the Director of the Office of Thrift Supervision;

(2) under the Federal Credit Union Act (12 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) by the Board of the National Credit Union Administration with respect to any Federally insured credit union;

(3) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78a et seq.) by the Securities and Exchange Commission with respect to any broker or dealer;

(4) under the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a–1 et seq.) by the Securities and Exchange Commission with respect to investment companies;

(5) under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80b–1 et seq.) by the Securities and Exchange Commission with respect to investment advisers registered under that Act;

(6) under State insurance law in the case of any person engaged in providing insurance, by the applicable State insurance authority of the State in which the person is domiciled, subject to section 104 of the Gramm-Bliley-Leach Act (15 U.S.C. 6701), except that in any State in which the State insurance authority elects not to exercise this power, the enforcement authority pursuant to this chapter shall be exercised by the Commission in accordance with subsection (a);

(7) under part A of subtitle VII of title 49 by the Secretary of Transportation with respect to any air carrier or foreign air carrier subject to that part;

(8) under the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7 U.S.C. 181 et seq.) (except as provided in section 406 of that Act (7 U.S.C. 226, 227)), by the Secretary of Agriculture with respect to any activities subject to that Act;

(9) under the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2001 et seq.) by the Farm Credit Administration with respect to any Federal land bank, Federal land bank association, Federal intermediate credit bank, or production credit association; and

(10) under the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 151 et seq.) by the Federal Communications Commission with respect to any person subject to the provisions of that Act.

(c) Exercise of certain powers

For the purpose of the exercise by any agency referred to in subsection (b) of its powers under any Act referred to in that subsection, a violation of this chapter is deemed to be a violation of a Federal Trade Commission trade regulation rule. In addition to its powers under any provision of law specifically referred to in subsection (b), each of the agencies referred to in that subsection may exercise, for the purpose of enforcing compliance with any requirement imposed under this chapter, any other authority conferred on it by law.

(d) Actions by the Commission

The Commission shall prevent any person from violating this chapter in the same manner, by the same means, and with the same jurisdiction, powers, and duties as though all applicable terms and provisions of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.) were incorporated into and made a part of this chapter. Any entity that violates any provision of that subtitle ¹ is subject to the penalties and entitled to the privileges and immunities provided in the Federal Trade Commission Act in the same manner, by the same means, and with the same jurisdiction, power, and duties as though all applicable terms and provisions of the Federal Trade Commission Act were incorporated into and made a part of that subtitle.¹

(e) Availability of cease-and-desist orders and injunctive relief without showing of knowledge

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, in any proceeding or action pursuant to subsection (a), (b), (c), or (d) of this section to enforce compliance, through an order to cease and desist or an injunction, with section 7704(a)(1)(C) of this title, section 7704(a)(2) of this title, clause (ii), (iii), or (iv) of section 7704(a)(4)(A) of this title, section 7704(b)(1)(A) of this title, or section 7704(b)(3) of this title, neither the Commission nor the Federal Communications Commission shall be required to allege or prove the state of mind required by such section or subparagraph.

(f) Enforcement by States

(1) Civil action

In any case in which the attorney general of a State, or an official or agency of a State, has reason to believe that an interest of the residents of that State has been or is threatened or adversely affected by any person who violates paragraph (1) or (2) of section 7704(a), who violates section 7704(d), or who engages in a pattern or practice that violates paragraph (3), (4), or (5) of section 7704(a), of this title, the attorney general, official, or agency of the State, as *parens patriae*, may bring a civil action on behalf of the residents of the State in a district court of the United States of appropriate jurisdiction—

(A) to enjoin further violation of section 7704 of this title by the defendant; or

(B) to obtain damages on behalf of residents of the State, in an amount equal to the greater of—

(i) the actual monetary loss suffered by such residents; or

(ii) the amount determined under paragraph (3).

(2) Availability of injunctive relief without showing of knowledge

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, in a civil action under paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection, the attorney general, official, or agency of the State shall not be required to allege or prove the state of mind required by section 7704(a)(1)(C) of this title, section 7704(a)(2) of this title, clause (ii), (iii), or (iv) of section 7704(a)(4)(A) of this title, section 7704(b)(1)(A) of this title, or section 7704(b)(3) of this title.

(3) Statutory damages

(A) In general

For purposes of paragraph (1)(B)(ii), the amount determined under this paragraph is the amount calculated by multiplying the number of violations (with each separately addressed unlawful message received by or addressed to such residents treated as a separate violation) by up to \$250.

(B) Limitation

For any violation of section 7704 of this title (other than section 7704(a)(1) of this title), the amount determined under subparagraph (A) may not exceed \$2,000,000.

(C) Aggravated damages

The court may increase a damage award to an amount equal to not more than three times the amount otherwise available under this paragraph if—

(i) the court determines that the defendant committed the violation willfully and knowingly; or

(ii) the defendant's unlawful activity included one or more of the aggravating violations set forth in section 7704(b) of this title.

(D) Reduction of damages

In assessing damages under subparagraph (A), the court may consider whether—

(i) the defendant has established and implemented, with due care, commercially reasonable practices and procedures designed to effectively prevent such violations; or

(ii) the violation occurred despite commercially reasonable efforts to maintain compliance the practices and procedures to which reference is made in clause (i).

(4) Attorney fees

In the case of any successful action under paragraph (1), the court, in its discretion, may award the costs of the action and reasonable attorney fees to the State.

(5) Rights of Federal regulators

The State shall serve prior written notice of any action under paragraph (1) upon the Federal Trade Commission or the appropriate Federal regulator determined under subsection (b) and provide the Commission or appropriate Federal regulator with a copy of its complaint, except in any case in which such prior notice is not feasible, in which case the State shall serve such notice immediately upon instituting such action. The Federal Trade Commission or appropriate Federal regulator shall have the right—

- (A) to intervene in the action;
- (B) upon so intervening, to be heard on all matters arising therein;
- (C) to remove the action to the appropriate United States district court; and
- (D) to file petitions for appeal.

(6) Construction

For purposes of bringing any civil action under paragraph (1), nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent an attorney general of a State from exercising the powers conferred on the attorney general by the laws of that State to—

- (A) conduct investigations;
- (B) administer oaths or affirmations; or
- (C) compel the attendance of witnesses or the production of documentary and other evidence.

(7) Venue; service of process

(A) Venue

Any action brought under paragraph (1) may be brought in the district court of the United States that meets applicable requirements relating to venue under section 1391 of title 28.

(B) Service of process

In an action brought under paragraph (1), process may be served in any district in which the defendant—

- (i) is an inhabitant; or
- (ii) maintains a physical place of business.

(8) Limitation on State action while Federal action is pending

If the Commission, or other appropriate Federal agency under subsection (b), has instituted a civil action or an administrative action for violation of this chapter, no State attorney general, or official or agency of a State, may bring an action under this subsection during the pendency of that action against any defendant named in the complaint of the Commission or the other agency for any violation of this chapter alleged in the complaint.

(9) Requisite scienter for certain civil actions

Except as provided in section 7704(a)(1)(C) of this title, section 7704(a)(2) of this title, clause (ii), (iii), or (iv) of section 7704(a)(4)(A) of this title, section 7704(b)(1)(A) of this title, or section 7704(b)(3) of this title, in a civil action brought by a State attorney general, or an official or agency of a State, to recover monetary damages for a violation of this chapter, the court shall not grant the relief sought unless the attorney general, official, or agency establishes that the defendant acted with actual knowledge, or knowledge fairly implied on the basis of objective circumstances, of the act or omission that constitutes the violation.

(g) Action by provider of Internet access service

(1) Action authorized

A provider of Internet access service adversely affected by a violation of section 7704(a)(1), (b), or (d) of this title, or a pattern or practice that violates paragraph (2), (3), (4), or (5) of section 7704(a) of this title, may bring a civil action in any district court of the United States with jurisdiction over the defendant—

(A) to enjoin further violation by the defendant; or

(B) to recover damages in an amount equal to the greater of—

(i) actual monetary loss incurred by the provider of Internet access service as a result of such violation; or

(ii) the amount determined under paragraph (3).

(2) Special definition of "procure"

In any action brought under paragraph (1), this chapter shall be applied as if the definition of the term "procure" in section 7702(12) of this title contained, after "behalf" the words "with actual knowledge, or by consciously avoiding knowing, whether such person is engaging, or will engage, in a pattern or practice that violates this chapter".

(3) Statutory damages

(A) In general

For purposes of paragraph (1)(B)(ii), the amount determined under this paragraph is the amount calculated by multiplying the number of violations (with each separately addressed unlawful message that is transmitted or attempted to be transmitted over the facilities of the provider of Internet access service, or that is transmitted or attempted to be transmitted to an electronic mail address obtained from the provider of Internet access service in violation of section 7704(b)(1)(A)(i) of this title, treated as a separate violation) by—

(i) up to \$100, in the case of a violation of section 7704(a)(1) of this title; or

(ii) up to \$25, in the case of any other violation of section 7704 of this title.

(B) Limitation

For any violation of section 7704 of this title (other than section 7704(a)(1) of this title), the amount determined under subparagraph (A) may not exceed \$1,000,000.

(C) Aggravated damages

The court may increase a damage award to an amount equal to not more than three times the amount otherwise available under this paragraph if—

(i) the court determines that the defendant committed the violation willfully and knowingly; or

(ii) the defendant's unlawful activity included one or more of the aggravated violations set forth in section 7704(b) of this title.

(D) Reduction of damages

In assessing damages under subparagraph (A), the court may consider whether—

- (i) the defendant has established and implemented, with due care, commercially reasonable practices and procedures designed to effectively prevent such violations; or
- (ii) the violation occurred despite commercially reasonable efforts to maintain compliance with the practices and procedures to which reference is made in clause (i).

(4) Attorney fees

In any action brought pursuant to paragraph (1), the court may, in its discretion, require an undertaking for the payment of the costs of such action, and assess reasonable costs, including reasonable attorneys' fees, against any party.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §7, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2711.)

References in Text

This chapter, referred to in text, was in the original "this Act", meaning [Pub. L. 108–187, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699](#), which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7701 of this title and Tables.

Sections 25 and 25A of the Federal Reserve Act, referred to in subsec. (b)(1)(B), are classified to subchapters I (§601 et seq.) and II (§611 et seq.), respectively, of chapter 6 of Title 12, Banks and Banking.

The Federal Credit Union Act, referred to in subsec. (b)(2), is act [June 26, 1934, ch. 750, 48 Stat. 1216](#), as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 14 (§1751 et seq.) of Title 12, Banks and Banking. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 1751 of Title 12 and Tables.

The Securities Exchange Act of 1934, referred to in subsec. (b)(3), is act [June 6, 1934, ch. 404, 48 Stat. 881](#), as amended, which is classified principally to chapter 2B (§78a et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 78a of this title and Tables.

The Investment Company Act of 1940, referred to in subsec. (b)(4), is title I of act [Aug. 22, 1940, ch. 686, 54 Stat. 789](#), as amended, which is classified generally to subchapter I (§80a–1 et seq.) of chapter 2D of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 80a–51 of this title and Tables.

The Investment Advisers Act of 1940, referred to in subsec. (b)(5), is title II of act [Aug. 22, 1940, ch. 686, 54 Stat. 847](#), as amended, which is classified generally to subchapter II (§80b–1 et seq.) of chapter 2D of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 80b–20 of this title and Tables.

The Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, referred to in subsec. (b)(8), is act [Aug. 15, 1921, ch. 64, 42 Stat. 159](#), as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 9 (§181 et seq.) of Title 7,

Agriculture. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 181 of Title 7 and Tables.

The Farm Credit Act of 1971, referred to in subsec. (b)(9), is [Pub. L. 92–181, Dec. 10, 1971, 85 Stat. 583](#), as amended, which is classified principally to chapter 23 (§2001 et seq.) of Title 12, Banks and Banking. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 2001 of Title 12 and Tables.

The Communications Act of 1934, referred to in subsec. (b)(10), is act [June 19, 1934, ch. 652, 48 Stat. 1064](#), as amended, which is classified principally to chapter 5 (§151 et seq.) of Title 47, Telecommunications. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 609 of Title 47 and Tables.

The Federal Trade Commission Act, referred to in subsec. (d), is act [Sept. 26, 1914, ch. 311, 38 Stat. 717](#), as amended, which is classified generally to subchapter I (§41 et seq.) of chapter 2 of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 58 of this title and Tables.

Effective Date

Section effective Jan. 1, 2004, see section 16 of Pub. L. 108–187, set out as a note under section 7701 of this title.

¹ *So in original.*

§7707. Effect on other laws

(a) Federal law

(1) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to impair the enforcement of section 223 or 231 of title 47, chapter 71 (relating to obscenity) or 110 (relating to sexual exploitation of children) of title 18, or any other Federal criminal statute.

(2) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to affect in any way the Commission's authority to bring enforcement actions under FTC Act for materially false or deceptive representations or unfair practices in commercial electronic mail messages.

(b) State law

(1) In general

This chapter supersedes any statute, regulation, or rule of a State or political subdivision of a State that expressly regulates the use of electronic mail to send commercial messages, except to the extent that any such statute, regulation, or rule prohibits falsity or deception in any portion of a commercial electronic mail message or information attached thereto.

(2) State law not specific to electronic mail

This chapter shall not be construed to preempt the applicability of—

(A) State laws that are not specific to electronic mail, including State trespass, contract, or tort law; or

(B) other State laws to the extent that those laws relate to acts of fraud or computer crime.

(c) No effect on policies of providers of Internet access service

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to have any effect on the lawfulness or unlawfulness, under any other provision of law, of the adoption, implementation, or enforcement by a provider of Internet access service of a policy of declining to transmit, route, relay, handle, or store certain types of electronic mail messages.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §8, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2716.)

References in Text

This chapter, referred to in text, was in the original "this Act", meaning Pub. L. 108–187, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7701 of this title and Tables.

Effective Date

Section effective Jan. 1, 2004, see section 16 of Pub. L. 108–187, set out as a note under section 7701 of this title.

§7708. Do-Not-E-Mail registry

(a) In general

Not later than 6 months after December 16, 2003, the Commission shall transmit to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce a report that—

- (1) sets forth a plan and timetable for establishing a nationwide marketing Do-Not-E-Mail registry;
- (2) includes an explanation of any practical, technical, security, privacy, enforceability, or other concerns that the Commission has regarding such a registry; and
- (3) includes an explanation of how the registry would be applied with respect to children with e-mail accounts.

(b) Authorization to implement

The Commission may establish and implement the plan, but not earlier than 9 months after December 16, 2003.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §9, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2716.)

§7709. Study of effects of commercial electronic mail

(a) In general

Not later than 24 months after December 16, 2003, the Commission, in consultation with the Department of Justice and other appropriate agencies, shall submit a report to the Congress

that provides a detailed analysis of the effectiveness and enforcement of the provisions of this chapter and the need (if any) for the Congress to modify such provisions.

(b) Required analysis

The Commission shall include in the report required by subsection (a)—

(1) an analysis of the extent to which technological and marketplace developments, including changes in the nature of the devices through which consumers access their electronic mail messages, may affect the practicality and effectiveness of the provisions of this chapter;

(2) analysis and recommendations concerning how to address commercial electronic mail that originates in or is transmitted through or to facilities or computers in other nations, including initiatives or policy positions that the Federal Government could pursue through international negotiations, fora, organizations, or institutions; and

(3) analysis and recommendations concerning options for protecting consumers, including children, from the receipt and viewing of commercial electronic mail that is obscene or pornographic.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §10, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2716.)

References in Text

This chapter, referred to in subsecs. (a) and (b)(1), was in the original "this Act", meaning Pub. L. 108–187, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7701 of this title and Tables.

Effective Date

Section effective Jan. 1, 2004, see section 16 of Pub. L. 108–187, set out as a note under section 7701 of this title.

§7710. Improving enforcement by providing rewards for information about violations; labeling

The Commission shall transmit to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce—

(1) a report, within 9 months after December 16, 2003, that sets forth a system for rewarding those who supply information about violations of this chapter, including—

(A) procedures for the Commission to grant a reward of not less than 20 percent of the total civil penalty collected for a violation of this chapter to the first person that—

(i) identifies the person in violation of this chapter; and

(ii) supplies information that leads to the successful collection of a civil penalty by the Commission; and

(B) procedures to minimize the burden of submitting a complaint to the Commission concerning violations of this chapter, including procedures to allow the electronic submission of complaints to the Commission; and

(2) a report, within 18 months after December 16, 2003, that sets forth a plan for requiring commercial electronic mail to be identifiable from its subject line, by means of compliance with Internet Engineering Task Force Standards, the use of the characters "ADV" in the subject line, or other comparable identifier, or an explanation of any concerns the Commission has that cause the Commission to recommend against the plan.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §11, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2717.)

References in Text

This chapter, referred to in par. (1), was in the original "this Act", meaning Pub. L. 108–187, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7701 of this title and Tables.

Effective Date

Section effective Jan. 1, 2004, see section 16 of Pub. L. 108–187, set out as a note under section 7701 of this title.

§7711. Regulations

(a) In general

The Commission may issue regulations to implement the provisions of this Act (not including the amendments made by sections 4 and 12). Any such regulations shall be issued in accordance with section 553 of title 5.

(b) Limitation

Subsection (a) may not be construed to authorize the Commission to establish a requirement pursuant to section 7704(a)(5)(A) of this title to include any specific words, characters, marks, or labels in a commercial electronic mail message, or to include the identification required by section 7704(a)(5)(A) of this title in any particular part of such a mail message (such as the subject line or body).

(Pub. L. 108–187, §13, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2717.)

References in Text

This Act (not including the amendments made by sections 4 and 12), referred to in subsec. (a), is Pub. L. 108–187, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699, which is classified principally to this chapter. Section 4 enacted section 7703 of this title, section 1037 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, and provisions listed in a table relating to sentencing guidelines set out as a note under section 994 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure. Section 12 amended section 227 of Title 47, Telecommunications. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7701 of this title and Tables.

Effective Date

Section effective Jan. 1, 2004, see section 16 of Pub. L. 108–187, set out as a note under section 7701 of this title.

§7712. Application to wireless

(a) Effect on other law

Nothing in this chapter shall be interpreted to preclude or override the applicability of section 227 of title 47 or the rules prescribed under section 6102 of this title.

(b) FCC rulemaking

The Federal Communications Commission, in consultation with the Federal Trade Commission, shall promulgate rules within 270 days to protect consumers from unwanted mobile service commercial messages. The Federal Communications Commission, in promulgating the rules, shall, to the extent consistent with subsection (c)—

(1) provide subscribers to commercial mobile services the ability to avoid receiving mobile service commercial messages unless the subscriber has provided express prior authorization to the sender, except as provided in paragraph (3);

(2) allow recipients of mobile service commercial messages to indicate electronically a desire not to receive future mobile service commercial messages from the sender;

(3) take into consideration, in determining whether to subject providers of commercial mobile services to paragraph (1), the relationship that exists between providers of such services and their subscribers, but if the Commission determines that such providers should not be subject to paragraph (1), the rules shall require such providers, in addition to complying with the other provisions of this chapter, to allow subscribers to indicate a desire not to receive future mobile service commercial messages from the provider—

(A) at the time of subscribing to such service; and

(B) in any billing mechanism; and

(4) determine how a sender of mobile service commercial messages may comply with the provisions of this chapter, considering the unique technical aspects, including the functional and character limitations, of devices that receive such messages.

(c) Other factors considered

The Federal Communications Commission shall consider the ability of a sender of a commercial electronic mail message to reasonably determine that the message is a mobile service commercial message.

(d) Mobile service commercial message defined

In this section, the term "mobile service commercial message" means a commercial electronic mail message that is transmitted directly to a wireless device that is utilized by a subscriber of commercial mobile service (as such term is defined in section 332(d) of title 47) in connection with such service.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §14, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2718.)

References in Text

This chapter, referred to in subsecs. (a) and (b)(3), (4), was in the original "this Act", meaning Pub. L. 108–187, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699, which is classified principally to this chapter.

For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7701 of this title and Tables.

Effective Date

Section effective Jan. 1, 2004, see section 16 of Pub. L. 108–187, set out as a note under section 7701 of this title.

§7713. Separability

If any provision of this chapter or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this chapter and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected.

(Pub. L. 108–187, §15, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2718.)

References in Text

This chapter, referred to in text, was in the original "this Act", meaning Pub. L. 108–187, Dec. 16, 2003, 117 Stat. 2699, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7701 of this title and Tables.

Effective Date

Section effective Jan. 1, 2004, see section 16 of Pub. L. 108–187, set out as a note under section 7701 of this title.