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Ponemon Institute and TRUSTe Rank America's Most Trusted Companies in Privacy

eBay Takes The Top Honor; Verizon, USPS and Facebook rise in the ranks

Traverse City, Mich. and San Francisco (September 16, 2009) – Comprehensive analysis of the privacy practices of America's largest brands found eBay, Verizon and the U.S. Postal Service to be the winners of the 2009 Most Trusted Companies for Privacy Award, commissioned by Ponemon Institute, an information security research company, and TRUSTe, the most widely recognized privacy trustmark company on the Web.

The Ponemon Institute and TRUSTe conducted a two-stage survey to gauge the privacy policies and practices of leading consumer brands. First, the companies were rated as "most trusted" in an unaided survey of 6,486 adult-aged U.S. consumers. Second, an expert review panel at the Ponemon Institute judged the companies based on rigorous criteria, including the clarity and readability of privacy statements, notice, access to account information, cookie management, in- and out-of-network data sharing practices, as well as the availability of customer service staff.

According to the 2009 survey results, eBay is the Most Trusted Company for Privacy, proving that the e-commerce site can protect consumer privacy, all while handling massive volumes of sensitive data across the globe. Verizon earned the ranking as the second most trusted company, while the U.S. Postal Service, WebMD, and IBM rounded out the top five.

Verizon and the U.S. Postal Service became the very first telecommunications and government organizations, respectively, to crack the top three. Also of note, Facebook made its first ever appearance in the top 10, despite a tumultuous year for the social network's privacy practices. This jump signifies Facebook's commitment to implementing privacy practices that are approved by both their user community and privacy experts.

The rankings reflect a picture of today's uncertain but evolving consumer reality, with long-standing brands making a strong showing alongside newer online properties, which ultimately comprised four of the top-ranked companies. IBM's continued presence on the list shows the power and durability of its brand with both business and consumers

2009 Award Winners	
1 eBay	6 Procter & Gamble
2 Verizon	7 Nationwide
3 US Postal Service	8 Intuit
4 WebMD	9 Yahoo!
5 IBM	10 Facebook

"Year in and year out our Most Trusted Companies for Privacy study is a fascinating snapshot of public sentiment toward business, and the overall drop of financial services organizations in 2009 continues that trend," observed Dr. Larry Ponemon, chairman and founder, Ponemon Institute.

"With the banking industry at the center of a national financial crisis, it's no surprise to see a loss of trust reflected in the rankings of even those top performers on this list. Meanwhile, the continued strong showing of e-businesses such as eBay, WebMD, Yahoo!, and Facebook seems to demonstrate consumers' growing comfort with doing business online."

"We are honored to learn that TRUSTe and the Ponemon Institute have recognized our leading practices for privacy, security and trust – all qualities we feel are synonymous with our brand," said Scott Shipman, CPO of eBay, Inc. "At eBay, we constantly and carefully listen to customer feedback and respond with program enhancements to improve the high level of trust and satisfaction our members enjoy."

"We are honored to be named one of the most trusted companies for privacy. Privacy is a key priority at Verizon, because we know consumers will only use the full capabilities of our communications networks if they trust that their information will remain private," said Kathy Zanolovic, Chief Privacy Officer for Verizon. "We are gratified that Verizon's privacy policy and practices have been found to give our customers the high standard of privacy they deserve."

"All of the top 20 companies deserve recognition as privacy leaders," said Fran Maier, CEO of TRUSTe. "We are proud to spotlight their commitment to innovating in privacy."

TRUSTe and Ponemon Institute will host a Webinar to discuss the Most Trusted Companies for Privacy awards on September 24, 2009 at 11 a.m. PST. Larry Ponemon and TRUSTe CEO Fran Maier will present. To RSVP for the Webinar, please email webinar@truste.com with the subject "Most Trusted Company for Privacy Award."

About Ponemon Institute

The **Ponemon Institute**© is dedicated to advancing responsible information and privacy management practices in business and government. To achieve this objective, the Institute conducts independent research, educates leaders from the private and public sectors and verifies the privacy and data protection practices of organizations in a variety of industries.

About TRUSTe

TRUSTe Privacy Seals help consumers click with confidence by guiding them to trustworthy Web sites. Thousands of Web sites rely on TRUSTe industry best practices to help them make the right decisions about privacy and protecting confidential user information. Half of the top fifty Web sites are certified to TRUSTe's leading practices including, Disney, eBay, Facebook, Intuit, Microsoft and Yahoo. To find out more about privacy, visit <http://www.truste.com>.

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