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### **CDT Files Complaint Against Major Distributor of Deceptive “Adware”**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Center for Democracy & Technology (CDT) today asked the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to put an end to the illegal and deceptive practices of 180solutions Inc., one of the world’s largest developers of Internet advertising software.

In a detailed complaint, CDT outlines a pattern whereby 180Solutions, through a complicated web of affiliate relationships, deliberately and repeatedly attempted to dupe Internet users into downloading intrusive advertising software. The complaint illustrates how 180solutions continued this pattern of practice even after being warned by technology experts, privacy advocates and its own auditors that its practices were unethical, and in several cases, illegal.

“180solutions and its affiliates have caused immeasurable harm, not just to individual Internet users, but to the Internet itself,” CDT Deputy Director Ari Schwartz said. “This company’s brazen distribution practices saddle innocent Internet users with intrusive software that they neither want nor need and contribute to a general sense of wariness and distrust that threatens to stifle the growth of the medium. We are urging the FTC to use all the tools at its disposal to bring these practices to a halt, since 180solutions has repeatedly failed to adequately police its own distribution network.”

Based in Bellevue, Wash., 180solutions sells advertising and distributes advertising software on its own Web sites and through a far-flung network of affiliates. Once installed, the software tracks users’ online movements and displays advertisements based on the sites they visit.

CDT has been investigating 180solutions and its affiliates for more than two years. During that time, CDT has alerted the company about several of its affiliates that were deceptively installing 180solutions software. 180solutions was initially cooperative, halting certain practices, and even going so far as to file lawsuits against some affiliates. However, throughout that period, CDT received a nearly continuous stream of new complaints about 180solutions and its affiliates.

After more than two years of investigation and discussion, CDT concluded that 180solutions' underlying business model is fundamentally flawed, and that until it is changed, consumers will continue to become unwitting victims of its deceptive software installations.

"We're deeply disappointed that we weren't able to convince 180solutions to clean up its practices," Schwartz said. "CDT would always prefer to resolve issues of this sort through dialogue and voluntary improvements, but in this case we tried and were unable to reach an agreement that protects consumers."

In addition to the broad "pattern of practice" complaint filed today, CDT also joined with the Technology Law & Public Policy Clinic at the University of Washington School of Law to file a separate complaint targeting 180solutions' ongoing relationship with a specific affiliate, CJB.NET. Full text of both complaints is available online at <http://www.cdt.org>.

CDT has emerged as one of the leading public interest organizations in the global fight against spyware. Over the years, CDT has filed several complaints against spyware distributors with the FTC, many of which have already resulted in investigations and injunctions against egregious distributors.

**About CDT:** The Center for Democracy and Technology works to promote democratic values and constitutional liberties in the digital age. With expertise in law, technology, and policy, CDT seeks practical solutions to enhance free expression and privacy in global communications technologies. CDT is dedicated to building consensus among all parties interested in the future of the Internet and other new communications media.