

Press Releases

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OTS 03-15 - Regulators Issue Guidance on the Risks of Weblinking

Office of Thrift Supervision

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Joint Release

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
National Credit Union Administration
Office of the Comptroller of the Currency
Office of Thrift Supervision

Regulators Issue Guidance on the Risks of Weblinking

WASHINGTON - Four financial services regulatory agencies today issued guidance to assist financial institutions in identifying and managing the potential risks involved in the use of weblinks. A weblink transports a viewer to a different part of a website or to another website. The primary source of risk is that financial institution customers may be confused about the role and responsibility of the institution with respect to products or services available from third parties through the weblink. The risk of confusion is particularly significant when a weblink enables a customer to purchase a financial product or service. Customer confusion can also occur if it is unclear whether financial products from linked third parties are federally insured.

In response to these risks, today's guidance encourages financial institutions to use clear and conspicuous disclosures to explain their limited roles with respect to products and services offered by third parties. The regulatory agencies also encourage financial institutions to have plans and programs to respond to customer complaints, conduct appropriate due diligence of potential weblinking parties and monitor the activities of linked third parties to ensure that they are aware of any changes in the risks associated with the weblinking relationship.

Interagency Guidance on Weblinking - <http://www.occ.gov/static/news-issuances/ots/press-releases/ots-pr-2003-15a.pdf>

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The Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS), a bureau of the U.S. Treasury, regulates and supervises the nation's thrift industry. OTS's mission is to ensure the safety and soundness of thrift institutions and to support their role as home mortgage lenders and providers of other community credit and financial services. For copies of news releases or other documents visit the OTS web page at <http://www.ots.treas.gov/>.