



Innovations in Digital Accountability **The Best Practices Series**

ShareThis – “The Resolute Commitment to Privacy”

ShareThis is a leader in the rapidly growing “sharing” field. There are so many social web communities and websites today that a company like ShareThis allows consumers to instantly access all of their profiles, blogs, friends and contacts for easing sharing and updating.

With this sharing of information comes enormous responsibility. “Sharing is personal,” said Tim Schigel, CEO of ShareThis. “People share what matters most to them and their friends. The key important reason for sharing, according to a study by Forrester – The Ins and Outs of Sharing – is that people share to help others. Therefore, we created a platform that is trustworthy and maintains the highest standards for our users and publishing partners.”

“There are few issues related to digital accountability that engender more dialogue, or are more personal, than privacy,” said ImServices’ CEO Dick Bennett. “There are huge issues about trust. How you respect your users’ privacy is really paramount.”

ShareThis wanted to be pro-active to make sure the company collected and stored data correctly. Since ShareThis has such a large footprint across the Internet, ensuring the proper handling of data was critical to the success of their business.

“The main focus of this accreditation was to take the right steps to confirm that we handle our data properly,” said Schigel. “We never want to compromise personally identifiable information.”

ShareThis commissioned ImServices Group, a leader in digital certification and auditing, to certify that ShareThis conforms to the highest industry standards in the area of online privacy and follows Guidelines for Online Privacy as published by the Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB), Online Privacy Association (OPA) and the Federal Trade Commission.

“Our audit of ShareThis’ adherence to the five core principles of online privacy from the IAB Privacy Principles, the OPA Guidelines for Online Privacy and other published industry standards showed them to be in complete compliance,” said ImServices’ Bennett. “We think that it is significant that, as a young, innovative company, ShareThis has taken a leadership role in seeing the necessity and value of a third party privacy audit.”

“We found the process to be very comprehensive and thorough. ImServices expertise was invaluable,” said ShareThis’ Schigel. “This was a major part of our plan so that all of our publishers and partners, whether large or small, will feel comfortable with our data retention policies.”

Privacy is believed to remain one of the paramount issues facing digital marketers both among consumers and among government regulators. Companies like ShareThis and ImServices seek to be among the innovators in establishing standards – and living up to them.

ShareThis applauded the certification process and ImServices evaluation ... “they helped define our policies and establish the right process for the long-term,” said Mr. Schigel.

As Digital Media continue to seek legitimacy and Best Practices, privacy certifications like that done for ShareThis by ImServices are sure to grow. “First to Market” companies to show leadership, like ShareThis, are to be applauded and supported for seeking to bring confidence to their users, partners and regulators alike. It is a bold step in the right direction.

For more information on the IAB’s new Privacy Guidelines, please visit their website, and then, give us a call to talk about designing a compliance plan for you ...

http://www.iab.net/iab_products_and_industry_services/1421/1443/1464

For further information on this case study or to learn more about Innovations in Digital Accountability, please contact Dick Bennett, President and CEO of ImServices at richard.bennett@imservicesgroup.com.

About the Author

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About ShareThis

ShareThis lets people easily share the things they find online, in the most convenient way possible. ShareThis consolidates address books and friend lists, so that anything can be shared immediately, without ever leaving a webpage. ShareThis’s experienced management team comprises industry leaders with expertise gained within international media, marketing and technology companies including Advertising.com, AOL, Yahoo and Nielsen Buzzmetrics. (www.sharethis.com)

About ImServices

ImServices Group Ltd. is a leading provider of independent consulting and verification services, including process reviews, activity, and privacy audits, for Web sites, third-party ad servers, email delivery systems and other interactive media companies. (www.imservicesgroup.com)