



# The Consumer Sentinel Network: A Law Enforcement Tool

**GLACY**

**Dakar – March 2014**

Betsy Broder

US Federal Trade Commission  
Office of International Affairs





# The Consumer Sentinel Network

- **Consumer Sentinel** is the unique investigative cyber tool that provides members of the Consumer Sentinel Network with access to millions of consumer complaints. Consumer Sentinel includes complaints about:
  - Identity Theft
  - Immigration Services
  - Do-Not-Call Registry violations
  - Computers, the Internet, and Online Auctions
  - Telemarketing Scams
  - Advance-fee Loans and Credit Scams
  - Sweepstakes, Lotteries, and Prizes
  - Business Opportunities and Work-at-Home Schemes
  - Health and Weight Loss Products
  - Debt Collection, Credit Reports, and Financial Matters



- **Consumer Sentinel** is based on the premise that sharing information can make law enforcement even more effective. To that end, the Consumer Sentinel Network provides law enforcement members with access to complaints provided directly to the Federal Trade Commission by consumers, military personnel and their families, as well as providing members with access to complaints shared by data contributors, who include:

All Better Business Bureaus  
Alaska Attorney General  
California Attorney General  
Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre  
Canadian Competition Bureau  
Catalog Choice  
Colorado Attorney General  
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau  
Idaho Attorney General  
Identity Theft Assistance Center  
Indiana Attorney General  
Internet Crime Complaint Center  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights  
Los Angeles County Department of  
Consumer Affairs  
Louisiana Attorney General  
Maine Attorney General  
Michigan Attorney General

Minnesota Department of Public Safety  
Mississippi Attorney General  
MoneyGram International  
Montana Department of Justice  
National Consumers League  
North Carolina Department of Justice  
Ohio Attorney General  
Oregon Department of Justice  
Privacy Rights Clearinghouse  
Privacy Star  
Publishers Clearing House  
South Carolina Department of  
Consumer Affairs  
Tennessee Consumer Affairs  
Division  
U.S. Postal Inspection Service  
Washington Attorney General  
Western Union Company  
Xerox Corporation

Welcome, Raul Burgos | Your password expires in 38 days

My Disk Space:  8 mb in use / 92 mb left

environment

All Complaints

Past 1 Year

GO

Search Tools

My Searches

Alerts

Add Complaints

Help

Import

User Admin

Welcome to the new Consumer Sentinel Network, featuring a fresh look and streamlined homepage. [Learn more about it here.](#) [Comments?](#)

I want to ... My Sentinel Help Desk

Web: [Online contact form](#)  
Telephone: 1-877-701-9595 (tol-free)  
Email: [CustomerSupport@ConsumerSentinel.gov](mailto:CustomerSupport@ConsumerSentinel.gov)  
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Eastern)  
Monday-Friday

#### Sentinel News

- [Network News \(July 2012\) \(July 01, 2012\)](#)
- [Network News \(January 2012\) \(January 31, 2012\)](#)
- [Network News Newsletter Archives](#)

SEARCH:

Fraud

Identity Theft

Do Not Call

Spam

Created Date:  To

#### COMPANY INFORMATION

Name:

City:

State:   
Alabama  
Alaska  
American Samca

Postal Code:

#### CONSUMER INFORMATION

City:

State:   
Alabama  
Alaska  
American Samca

Product Service Code:   
Advance-Fee Loans, Credit Arrangers  
Auto: Financing  
Auto: Gas

CLEAR

SEARCH

[Advanced Search](#)

# Finding a Complaint: Quick Search Feature



environment    All Complaints    Past 1 Year    GO

Search Tools    My Searches    Alerts    Add Complaints    Help    Import    User Admin

Search    PRINTER FRIENDLY PAGE    ABOUT SEARCH RESULTS

**2,015 Record(s) Found |**

Records Per Page: 100 | Search Date: 8/24/2012 3:44:43 PM

Search Criteria: environment; Selected Complaint Types:All Complaints; Selected Period:Past 1 Year; Name Variations Included

VIEW SELECTED RECORD(S)    UNCHECK SELECTED RECORD(S)    VIEW SIMILAR COMPLAINTS

Pages: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | > >>

#	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All	Subject Information (Name Address, City State Phone)	Created Date	Product Service Code / Theft Subtype	Amount Paid	Complaint Source	Comments
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown    Unknown, California Unknown    Unknown, California	8/24/2012 12:40:22 AM	Product Service Code (s): - Other (Note in Comments)		FTC Online Complaint Assistant (CIS)	...to have these people stop calling me because I am not the person they are looking for. In a secure <b>environment</b> I will provide my middle name and ssan to prove I am not [redacted] ll. I repeat: I AM N...
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown    California	8/23/2012 3:25:58 AM	Product Service Code (s): - Auto: Sales – New		FTC Online Complaint Assistant (CIS)	...an likely warped rotors due to their inability to withstand the driving conditions of a hot desert <b>environment</b> such as Nevada.What is more unsettling thar warped rotors is the potential safety hazard th...

- [Add/Delete Fields?](#)
- [Save Search Criteria](#)
- [Schedule Search](#)
- [Save Results](#)
- [Download](#)
- [FOIA Download](#)

- Narrow Your Results
- Search Within These Results:  GO
- Investigate By: ?
- Subject
  - Associated Institution
  - Consumer
  - Product Service (91)
  - Statute (11)
  - Violation (65)
  - Topic (2)
  - Complaint Source (Top 100)
  - Amount Paid (6)
  - ID Theft
  - DNC Questions
  - Within Comments

# Sample Search Results



#	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All	Subject Information (Name City State)			Reference Number	Product Service Code	Created Date	Amount Paid	Comments
<u>1</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				12038270	■ Creditor Debt Collection	11/5/2007 11:12:54 AM	\$1,700.00	
<u>2</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				12901338	■ Internet Access Services	2/9/2008 8:15:29 AM	\$0.00	
<u>3</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		--	--	19325892	■ Charitable Solicitations	6/18/2008 11:53:37 AM		
<u>4</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		--	--	20361827	■ National Do Not Call Registry	9/22/2008 11:48:03 PM		
<u>5</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				20263691		9/13/2008 6:44:17 PM		
<u>6</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			New Jersey	12080617	■ National Do Not Call Registry	11/10/2007 4:41:16 AM		
<u>7</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Alabama	12085214	■ National Do Not Call Registry	11/10/2007 4:59:45 AM		



# How to Use Consumer Sentinel Complaint Information



- Use the information in the complaint record as a starting point for your own investigation.
- Example:  
Note a consumer's phone number. Then, call that consumer and ask for their permission to take a sworn declaration to use as evidence in your own case.



bienvenido



English

Español

Deutsch

Français

日本語

한국어

Polski

Türk

An initiative of the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN).





Your site for cross-border consumer complaints.

Select your language preference:

English

Go

[About Us](#)

| [Member Countries](#)

| [Privacy Policy](#)

HOME

REPORT YOUR COMPLAINT

RESOLVE YOUR COMPLAINT

NEWS & RESOURCES

## About Us

In April of 2001, responding to the challenges of multinational Internet fraud, and working to enhance consumer protection and consumer confidence in e-commerce, 13 countries unveiled econsumer.gov, a joint effort to gather and share cross-border e-commerce complaints. Today, consumer protection agencies in [28 countries](#) participate in this initiative.

The project has two components: a multilingual public website, and a government, password-protected website. The public site allows consumers to lodge cross-border complaints, and to try to resolve their complaints through means other than formal legal action. Using the Consumer Sentinel network (a database of consumer complaint data and other investigative information operated by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission), the incoming complaints are shared with participating consumer protection law enforcers.



ICPEN

econsumer.gov is an initiative of the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN). ICPEN is a network of governmental organizations involved in the enforcement of fair trade practice laws and other consumer protection activities. Learn more at [www.icpen.org](http://www.icpen.org) >

Website Questions or Feedback?  
[econsumerwb@ftc.gov](mailto:econsumerwb@ftc.gov)

# User Login

- Consumer complaints entered through [www.econsumer.gov](http://www.econsumer.gov) are housed within the Consumer Sentinel Network database.
- To access econsumer.gov data, visit [www.consumersentinel.gov](http://www.consumersentinel.gov), and enter your user name, password, and individual software security token passcode (circled in red).
- The software security token (circled in red) is installed on your computer. For assistance with user access contact the Consumer Sentinel help desk at [CustomerSupport@ConsumerSentinel.gov](mailto:CustomerSupport@ConsumerSentinel.gov)

**CONSUMER SENTINEL NETWORK**  
Law enforcement's source for consumer complaints

## User Login

Please key in your password carefully and remember that it is case sensitive. If you enter an invalid password, the system will redirect you back to this login page to try again. If this happens, please wait for a new RSA Passcode to generate before retrying your login.

If you have any questions about the login process, please phone 1-877-701-9595 for assistance.

User name:

Sentinel Password:

**RSA** Token Passcode:

**Sign In**

[Forgot Password](#) [Help](#)

### NOTICE TO USERS

The use of this system is restricted to authorized users. Unauthorized access, use, or modification of this U.S. Government computer system, or of the data contained herein or in transit to/from this system, constitutes a violation of 18 U.S.C. §1030. This system is monitored to ensure proper performance of applicable security features and procedures. Such monitoring may result in the acquisition, recording and analysis of data being communicated, transmitted, processed or stored in this system by a user. In particular, we monitor the identity of all who access this system, as well as the date and time of their access. In addition, we review all user-submitted complaints and alerts. Unauthorized or improper use of this system may result in administrative disciplinary action, as well as civil and criminal penalties.

By continuing to use this system, you indicate your awareness of and consent to these terms and conditions of use.

# How to Search for Complaints

• After you log into the Consumer Sentinel Network, you can search for complaints in two ways:

- (1) Quick Search (circled in red);
- or
- (2) Advanced Search (circled in green).

CONSUMER SENTINEL NETWORK  
Law enforcement's source for consumer complaints

Welcome, Hui Ling Goh Your password expires in 30 days My Disk Space: 17 mb in use / 83 mb left

Enter key word(s) All Complaints Past 1 Year GO

Search Tools My Searches Alerts Submit Complaints Help For Criminal Law Enforcement

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION!** As part of our data retention program, every six months the Consumer Sentinel Network purges complaints older than 5 years and Spam records older than 3 years. This process will take place again in July 2013. For information on how to place a litigation hold on complaints that you may need, click [here](#).

I want to ... My Sentinel Help Desk

- Search Complaints
- Change Password
- Log Profile
- Search Top Subjects
- Search Alerts
- Search SPAM

Edit "I want to" Links

SEARCH: Fraud Identity Theft Do Not Call Spam

Created Date: 07/30/2012 To 07/30/2013

COMPANY INFORMATION

Name:

City:

State: Select a State  
Alabama  
Alaska  
American Samoa

Postal Code:

CONSUMER INFORMATION

City:

State: Select a State  
Alabama  
Alaska  
American Samoa

Product Service Code: Select Product Service Code  
Advance-Fee Loans, Credit Arrangers  
Auto: Financing  
Auto: Gas

CLEAR SEARCH

# How to Quick Search

- For basic key words, e.g. environment
- Use "AND" between key words to search for multiple key words in the same entry
- Use quotation marks to search for a phrase

environment    Fraud and Other Complaints only    Past 1 Year    GO

Search Tools    My Searches    Alerts    Add Complaints    Help    Import    User Admin

**Search** PRINTER FRIENDLY

**6 Record(s) Found**

Records Per Page: 100 | Search Date: 6/13/2012 3:01:52 PM

Search Criteria: environment; Selected Complaint Types: Fraud and Other Complaints only; Selected Period: Past 1 Year; Name Variation Navigators >> Subject Name: [REDACTED]

[VIEW SELECTED RECORD\(S\)](#)    [UICHECK SELECTED RECORD\(S\)](#)    [VIEW SIMILAR COMPLAINTS](#) ?

Pages: | 1 |

#	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All	Subject Information (Name Address, City State Phone)				Product Service Code / Theft Subtype	Amount Paid	Complaint Source	Comments
1	<input type="checkbox"/>		[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Tennessee	--	Product Service Code (s): - Real Estate (not Timeshares)	BBB TN Memphis	...ly as the person living in the home has been in a heated <b>environment</b> . The outside told the [REDACTED] had fast, reliab...	
2	<input type="checkbox"/>		[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Tennessee	--	Product Service Code (s): - Real Estate (not Timeshares)	BBB TN Memphis	...h the discovery of the water leak again mold growing <b>environment</b> . We need t [REDACTED]	
3	<input type="checkbox"/>		[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Tennessee	--	Product Service Code (s): - Real Estate (not Timeshares)	BBB TN Memphis	.... --- Additional Comments: I want my alternative <b>environment</b> (hotel) until so I have attempted to file a c...	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>		[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Tennessee	--	Product Service Code (s):	BBB TN Memphis	...deep south), we 'settled' on getting th in a safe <b>environment</b> . The A/C techni	

# Sample Search Results List

For confidentiality reasons, some of the content in the sample search results list is redacted.

#	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All	Subject Information (Name City State)			Reference Number	Product Service Code	Created Date	Amount Paid	Comments
<u>1</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				12038270	■ Creditor Debt Collection	11/5/2007 11:12:54 AM	\$1,700.00	
<u>2</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				12901338	■ Internet Access Services	2/9/2008 8:15:29 AM	\$0.00	
<u>3</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		--	--	19325892	■ Charitable Solicitations	6/18/2008 11:53:37 AM		
<u>4</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		--	--	20361827	■ National Do Not Call Registry	9/22/2008 11:48:03 PM		
<u>5</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				20263691		9/13/2008 6:44:17 PM		
<u>6</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			New Jersey	12080617	■ National Do Not Call Registry	11/10/2007 4:41:16 AM		
<u>7</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Alabama	12085214	■ National Do Not Call Registry	11/10/2007 4:59:45 AM		

# Narrow Your Results

- When a search results list has many items, you can narrow the results by specific fields
- On the “Search Results” screen, use the key word or "Investigate by" links under the "Narrow Your Results" section at the left side of the screen to search within your results

All Complaints ▼ Past 1 Year ▼

[Search Tools](#) ▼ [My Searches](#) ▼ [Alerts](#) ▼ [Add Complaints](#) ▼ [Help](#) ▼ [Import](#) ▼ [User Admin](#) ▼

**Search** PRINTER FRIENDLY P

**Narrow Your Results**

Search Within These Results:

Investigate By:

- Subject
- Subject Name (6)
  - Subject Country (1)
    - [United States \(10\)](#)
  - Subject Phone (12)
    - [Associated Institution](#)
    - [Consumer](#)
  - Product Service (4)
    - [National Do Not Call Registry \(37\)](#)
    - [Third Party Debt Collection \(11\)](#)
    - [Other \(Note in Comments\) \(2\)](#)
    - [Creditor Debt Collection \(1\)](#)
  - Statute (2)
  - Violation (13)
    - [Calls any person repeatedly or continuously \(9\)](#)
    - [Calls Someone Repeatedly to Obtain Debtor's Location \(7\)](#)
    - [Falsely Represents Character, Amount, Status of Debt \(7\)](#)
    - [Fails to Identify Self as Debt Collector \(5\)](#)
    - [Fails to Send Written Notice of Debt to Debtor \(4\)](#)

**51 Record(s) Found |**

Records Per Page:  | Search Date: 6/13/2012 4:03:09 PM

Search Criteria: '  '. Selected Complaint Types: All Complaints; Selected Period: Past 1 Year; Name Variations Included Navigators >> [Subject Name:](#)

Pages: | 1 |

#	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Subject Information (Name Address, City State Phone)	Product Service Code / Theft Subtype	Amount Paid	Complaint Source	Comments
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/> -- -- 866- : <input type="text"/>	Product Service Code(s): - Third Party Debt Collection		FTC Online Complaint Assistant (CIS)	...I believe this same company contacted m person with the sa...
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/> -- -- 866- : <input type="text"/>	Product Service Code(s): - Third Party Debt Collection	\$0.00	FTC Online Complaint Assistant (CIS)	This company calls up to 3 times a day. The answer, they say nothing. When I call back,
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/> ? -- -- 877- : <input type="text"/>	Product Service Code(s): - National Do Not Call Registry		National Do Not Call Registry	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/> -- -- --	Product Service Code(s): - National Do Not Call Registry		National Do Not Call Registry	
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/> -- -- 856- : <input type="text"/>	Product Service Code(s): - National Do Not Call Registry		National Do Not Call Registry	
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/> -- -- 855- : <input type="text"/>	Product Service Code(s): - National Do Not Call Registry		National Do Not Call Registry	
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/> -- -- 866- : <input type="text"/>	Product Service		National Do Not	Repeated calls after continuous request to st





# How to Advanced Search (1)

Consumer Sentinel also has an advanced search function, where you can search by a variety of fields.

The screenshot shows the Consumer Sentinel website's search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a welcome message for 'Raul Burgos' and a password expiration notice. Below this is a search bar with a text input field for 'Enter key word(s)', a dropdown menu set to 'All Complaints', and a date range dropdown set to 'Past 1 Year'. A 'GO' button is to the right of the date dropdown. A dark blue navigation menu contains links for 'Search Tools', 'My Searches', 'Alerts', 'Add Complaints', 'Help', 'Import', and 'User Admin'. The main content area is titled 'Search Tools' and features a sidebar on the left with various filters: 'Advanced Search : All Complaints', 'Recent Surge in Complaints', 'Alerts Created by Other Members', 'Sentinel Members', 'Do Not Call', 'DNC Complaints', 'Registered Telephone Numbers', 'Organizations Accessing the Registry', 'Spam', 'Submissions', and 'Reports'. The main search area is titled 'Advanced Search' (highlighted with a blue box) and offers two search modes: 'Search Across All Fields' and 'Search Specific Fields'. The 'Search Specific Fields' mode is selected. Below this, there is a section for 'Search Selected Complaints' with a green question mark icon and a blacked-out area. A checkbox is checked for 'Fraud and Other Complaints, and All Other Record Types (c)'. To the right, 'View Results Options' includes radio buttons for 'View List of Complaints', 'View Top Subjects by Subject Name', and 'View Top Subjects by Subject Phone Number', along with a checkbox for 'Remove "Unknown" company name and'. Below this is a section for 'Search on behalf of another user' with a green question mark icon, a checkbox for 'Search on behalf of another user', and radio buttons for 'Specific User' and 'Generic User'. A 'User ID:' input field is provided. A blue 'NEXT >>' button is at the bottom of the search area. The footer contains links for 'About Us', 'FOIA', 'Contact Us', 'Accessibility', 'Privacy Statement', 'Site Map', and 'Web Policy', along with the text 'Provided by the Federal Trade Commission' and the page number '17'.

# Advanced Search (2)

The advanced search function allows you to search by specific complaint data e.g. company name, address, country, etc.



Welcome, Raul Burgos Your password expires in 25 days My Disk Space: My Disk Space:

Enter key word(s)  All Complaints  Past 1 Year

Search Tools My Searches Alerts Add Complaints Help Import User Admin

### Search Tools

ABOUT ADVANCED SEARCH

#### Advanced Search

Search Across All Fields  Search Specific Fields

**Search Selected Complaints:**  Identity Theft (i)  Do Not Call (d)  Fraud and Other Complaints, and All Other Record Types (c)

**View Results Options:**  View List of Complaints  View Top Subjects by Subject Name  View Top Subjects by Subject Phone Number  Remove 'Unknown' company name and phone results?

Search on behalf of another user  Search on behalf of another user  Specific User  Generic User  
User ID:

**MODIFY**

**Created Date** cid  
The Consumer Sentinel Network deletes complaints after 5 years. Keep this in mind when selecting the Begin and End dates for your searches.  
Begin:  [View Calendar](#) End:  [View Calendar](#)

**Subject**

Primary Company / Suspect / Telemarketer Company  Associated Company / Institution

Company Name: cid

Address 1: ci  Address 2: ci

City: ci  ZIP: ci

Country: ci

# Advanced Search (3)

The advanced search function also allows you to search by amount paid, payment method, other key words etc.

Complaint Data

Internet Related? c     Records Having Mail Scanned Images Only? ci

Transaction Date cd

Begin:  [View Calendar](#)    End:  [View Calendar](#)

Amount Requested: ci     to  ?

Amount Paid: ci     to  ?

Payment Method: c

- Select Payment Method
- American Express Cash Advance
- American Express Credit Card
- Bank Account Debit

Initial Contact: c

- Please Select Contact Type
- Fax
- I Initiated Contact
- In Person

Initial Response: c

- Please Select Response Type
- Answer cold call
- Fax
- In Person

Comments: cid

Within  Words ?

Maintain Word Order

Within a Sentence

# Advanced Search (4)

The advanced search function also allows you to search by consumer location

**Consumer**

First Name: **cid**  Middle Name: **ci**

Last Name: **cid**

Complaining Company Name: **ci**

Address 1: **cid**  Address 2: **cid**

City: **cid**  ZIP: **cid**

Country: **cid**   
UNITED STATES  
AFGHANISTAN  
ALBANIA

State: **cid**   
Alabama  
Alaska  
American Samoa

Phone Country Code: **c**

Phone Area Code: **cid**  ?

Phone Number: **cid**  ?

Email: **ci**

Member of armed forces or dependent?: **ci**

Soldier Status: **ci**   
Active Duty Service Member  
Dependent Child/Other - DoD Civilian  
Dependent Child/Other - Service Member

Military Branch: **ci**   
U.S. Army  
U.S. Navy  
U.S. Air Force

Soldier Station: **ci**   
AK-FORT WAINWRIGHT  
AK-GALENA AIRPORT GALENA 99741 65 455319 163 139 279.3 Activ  
AK-HAARP RESEARCH STATION

Soldier Pay Grade: **ci**   
DoD Civilian  
E1-E3  
E4