

Sarah Rosen Wartell  
05/03/99 09:39:55 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Lowell A. Weiss/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: three little things

Some of these offers contain new traps for the unwary. For example, sometimes credit card companies advertise low interest rates -- known as "teaser rates" -- to reel in consumers ~~and then surprise them with~~ who are then surprised by unexpected interest rate hikes. We believe that any marketing of "teaser" rates for credit cards include equally prominent notice of their expiration date, their eventual annual percentage rate, and any penalties that apply.

***RATIONALE: Credit card companies say they don't surprise -- it is in the disclosure info. But it is in the boilerplate on the back of a tiny brochure mailed days after you apply. The marketing info isn't clear. But I am skittish about suggesting that credit cards are surprising them. Better consumers are surprized. Subtle, but VISA is in the audience.***

Third, we must do more to combat consumer fraud. Once, stealing another's identity required fraudulent documents. But today, as Mari Frank discovered the hard way, simply stealing a ~~PIN~~ any identifying number can be sufficient to allow a person to take out huge loans, run up enormous credit card debts, and tap into bank accounts.

***RATIONALE: Mari Barr had her social security number stolen. Some argue that we shouldn't use social security numbers as ID, but the government has rejected that policy because we're too dependant upon them. If you absolutely need to, you can say "social security number" but better if generic.***

Unfortunately, some in Congress would have us effectively limit -- rather than expanding -- access to financial services in underserved communities. As the Senate debates this issue this week...

***RATIONALE: obvious***