



# Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0505/14</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Computer Troubleshooters</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Information Technolo</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>Radio</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>10/12/2014</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

## ISSUES RAISED

2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement depicts a user who is very frustrated at their internet connection, verbally expressing their frustration by saying “Aaaahhhh, I can’t get the f...[beep] internet!”. A voiceover then says that if you are having problems with your computer don't call a geek, call a professional. He then gives the contact details for Computer Troubleshooters.

## THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

*During the opening lines to the advertisement, it is a person having issues with their computer, which they promptly swear at. Even though the f\*\*\* word is beeped, listeners still understand the word they're trying to convey. It is absolutely not necessary for that word to be part of the advertising and to be advertised when there are young ears listening.*

## THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

*This advertisement is being played on a youth radio where the target audience is tweens to 25’s.*

*They type of music played on this radio is sometimes edgy and mature – it is the Coffs Harbour equivalent to Triple J*

*When arranging the ad we were seeking something that would be audibly engaging and get the point across as well.*

*The ad indicates a user who is very frustrated at their internet connection, verbally expressing their frustration.*

*This is what end-users of internet do when they can't access their internet and it is a tone and style of language that is very familiar to our target audience.*

*This advertisement has not had any other complaints during the time it has been aired on CHYFM. It is not designed to offend, and is only used to highlight the frustration of a person having problems with their computer. The word is clearly bleeped out and is only directed to a computer, not to a human. As you will note in the supplied audio, the word bleeped out in the commercials is actually not a swear word at all, but we do understand how it could be interpreted by a lot of people as a bleeped out swear word.*

*The intention of the advertisement, whilst bringing listeners attention to our service was to use humour to engage the audience.*

*At no stage was there any intention to offend. The work “fuck” and all its variants, including the most offensive – “mother-f\*cker” is used in so many songs and is so regularly heard on the airwaves, that when I first read your letter I thought someone was playing a joke on me!*

*I have now spent time researching section 2.5 of the Code of ethics and I note that it permits language to be used in circumstances where it is appropriate and deems it should not be strong or obscene.*

*As noted – the person in the ad is addressing a computer/internet – not another person. The actual swearword is bleeped out, leaving only an audio semblance to indicate they are swearing, which is intended to show their level of frustration with the system. I would say that the language is appropriate in that it represents how a large section of our population reacts to technical frustration. The aim of the ad is for the listener to engage with the humorously portrayed level of frustration and to then associate our brand with a solution to their frustration, which is why they would call our business and engage our services.*

*I appreciate that you have to respond to complaints and I myself have complained about inappropriate ads in the past on TV. I have children and teenagers and I am well aware of the need for them to not be corrupted, coerced or negatively influenced by advertising. I genuinely do not believe that this advertisement is out of place on CHYFM or is out of place with the radio stations target audience.*

*If you believe the advertisement should be taken off the air please contact me and we can discuss further, however it is my belief that in its current state and target audience environment that the advertisement meets the guidelines.*

*Thank you for your patience waiting for my response – our ad has been so successful that I*

*am now snowed under with business!*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”). The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement features the ‘f’ word beeped out but still discernible and that this is not appropriate language for children to hear. The Board reviewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response. The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided”. The Board noted this radio advertisement features a man getting frustrated with his computer and saying, “Aaaahhhh, I can’t get the f...[beep] internet!” The Board noted it had previously considered similar complaints about the suggestion of the ‘f’ word in radio advertisements in case 0371/13 and in case 0016/11 where: “The Board noted the advertiser’s response that the word beeped out was “freaking” and that following the complaint they have removed the beeping so that you actually hear ‘un-freaking-believable offer’. The Board considered that the inferred meaning of the word beeped out is a strong swear word, the use of which resulted in an upheld decision for a Radio advertisement in case reference 0013/11. However the Board considered that in this instance, the word is spoken by an adult and not a child, there is not an aggressive tone to the word’s use and the intent of the advertiser was to avoid offence through the use of the word ‘freaking’.” In the current advertisement the Board noted that the beep sufficiently covers the word so it is not clear what word is being covered. The Board noted that most adults would assume that it is a swear word and most likely the ‘f’ word but considered that in the context of an adult venting his frustration about internet connectivity in the Board’s view the suggestion of the ‘f’ word is not inappropriate. The Board noted that the beeped out word is not being directed at a person and considered that overall the advertisement does not use language which is strong, obscene or inappropriate in the circumstances. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code. Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.