



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	144/98
2. Advertiser	AOL Bertelsmann Online Services
3. Product	Information Technology
4. Type of advertisement	Print
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 October 1998
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The print advertisement is in the form of a pamphlet/questionnaire. The front cover of the pamphlet comprises a photograph of a woman dressed in a dark zipped up anorak. The woman is holding a magazine about 'Trains'. On her anorak is a badge of what appears to be a steam train. She is also wearing very thick black rimmed spectacles. The words, 'What are Internet users really like?' (and others) appear at the top of the page. At the back of the pamphlet, there is another photograph of what appears to be the same woman. In the latter photograph she is shown dressed in a low cut black top. She is winking at the camera and is no longer wearing the glasses. She is holding what appears to be a woman's magazine. The words, '...and you could win \$5000!' appear at the top of the page.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments complainant made about the advertisement included:

'(the advertisement) makes people who are forced to wear spectacles feel that they are physically unattractive and are "nerds" personality-wise. The back of the questionnaire had a photo of the same woman without glasses looking seductive...Also, I don't agree that Internet users are generally considered inadequate, as the advert suggests.'

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ('the Board') considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics ('the Code').

The Board was of the view that the advertisement's portrayal (of the person concerned) did not constitute discrimination or vilification and did not breach the Code. The Board dismissed the complaint.