

Online Dating Service Decides Not to Buy Customer Database

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The Canadian online dating service PlentyofFish.com had been attempting to purchase the 43 million member database of bankrupt dating site True Beginnings. Information in the database included dates of birth, usernames, passwords, credit card numbers, as well as dating profiles. The database purchase price was set at \$700,000. The Texas Attorney General, however, filed an objection with the bankruptcy court on the grounds that the purchase would be a violation of True Beginnings' privacy policy, since members had not agreed to have their information sold. He argued that before data was transferred to the new owner, members should be notified and should opt into the sale of their information. True Beginnings, on the other hand, wanted to provide notice and give members the ability to opt-out of the sale. According to [documents](#) filed with the [termination notice](#) (when PlentyofFish.com indicated to the bankruptcy court that it would not be pursuing the purchase), PlentyofFish.com appeared to agree with the assessment of the Texas Attorney General, and used his letter as grounds to terminate the purchase.

TIP: If purchasing lists of consumer information, look carefully to see if the seller has the ability to transfer the assets. While the merits of the ability to transfer were not adjudicated in this case, it serves as a reminder that consumer advocates are sensitive to these issues.

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