NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SC Consumers Can Benefit from RealNetworks Settlement

Columbia, SC… RealNetworks, the Seattle based maker of "RealPlayer," has reached a settlement of $2.4 million with the Washington State Attorney General's Office for unfair and deceptive practices. The settlement is the result of almost a decade's worth of complaints lodged against the digital media company. Consumers complained of charges resulting from "free trials" for premium television, sports or game content that automatically converted into pay subscriptions after the trial period lapsed.

Part of the settlement terms requires the company to pay $2 million to consumers nationwide who "signed up" for services between January 2007 and December 2009. Affected consumers will be sent a postcard about the settlement. Consumers can also visit realnetworksrestitution.com to submit a claim. For a look at what services were offered, visit http://www.atg.wa.gov/pressrelease.aspx?&id=29818.

This settlement serves as a reminder for consumers to be vigilant when shopping for products and services, particularly on the internet. Consumers should always:

- Know exactly what service you are signing up for.
- Lookout for pre-checked boxes within the agreement.
- Be aware of the time limit set on the free trial.
- Understand that free trials might require the subscriber to opt out to avoid charges.
- Know the protocol for canceling the service.
- Monitor financial statements for any irregularities.

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SCDCA aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or get information on consumer issues, visit *www.consumer.sc.gov* or call toll-free, 1.800.922.1594.

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