

AN EXAMINATION OF PRIVACY POLICIES OF GLOBAL ON-LINE E-PHARMACIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the differences in privacy policy functions among 90 online pharmacy websites in nine countries in Europe, Asia and North America. Results from this study show that the majority of websites do have privacy policies, but the level of functional protection of consumers varies widely. Even in those countries where strong privacy laws exist, the level of privacy protection adherence is often very low. Most studies of privacy policy issues have concentrated on websites from developed nations, with few studies of the pharmacy industry. A better understanding of this industry, as well as understanding the differences in privacy policy implementation among developing and developed countries, provides important lessons for both businesses and consumers.

Keywords: E-pharmacy, online pharmacies, privacy, healthcare sector, privacy policies.