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## Cigarette Logos in Video Arcade Games Prompt Complaints

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When John W. Richards, an anti-smoking activist in Augusta, Georgia, discovered images of red-and-white Marlboro cigarette billboards prominently featured in a popular auto-racing video arcade game for teenage boys, he thought he scented a nefarious scheme by the cigarette's maker, Philip Morris, to persuade youngsters to smoke.

Richards complained to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which regulates cigarette advertising. Now, the FTC and a congressional subcommittee are asking Philip Morris and Sega, the games' manufacturer, why there is ciga-

rette advertising in youngsters' video games.

Philip Morris says it has no idea, and that Sega is guilty of trademark infringement. Company officials say they first learned that the Marlboro logo appeared in a Sega game last November, when a Philip Morris lawyer happened to notice it in a New York video arcade.

A congressional staffer noted that, perhaps not coincidentally, the company had received a letter earlier that same week from Rep. Thomas A. Luken (D-Ohio), inquiring about the games' use of Marlboro signs.

"Sega did not have permission to do this. They acknowledge it and have agreed to cease doing it," said John Nelson, vice president for cor-

porate affairs of Philip Morris USA. "The only thing I can assume is that it was just done by a computer programmer."

"We don't want minors smoking," he added. "We're particularly vigilant when it comes to any illegal use of our trademark on an item that's designed for young people."

The video game flap has surfaced at a time when one of Philip Morris's competitors, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., has been sharply criticized by Health and Human Services Secretary Louis W. Sullivan for cigarette advertising campaigns targeting blacks and women, and when government agencies are focusing increased attention on the issue of whether cigarette compa-

nies try to induce teenagers to start smoking.

FTC Chairman Janet D. Steiger, in a speech to the American Advertising Federation here last week, mentioned the "unexplained appearance of cigarette logos in video games" as an example of possible targeting of children and teenagers that concern the agency.

Kiichi Nishikura, general counsel of Sega Enterprises Ltd. in Tokyo, said his company's game designers routinely build images of billboard advertising into their racing games, in order to make them more realistic. He said the practice is legal under Japanese copyright law. He said Sega had no relationship with Philip Morris or other tobacco companies,

and had made no deals to include cigarette logos in games.

Nishikura said the billboards scroll by so fast that "we don't think this will have any serious subconscious effect." He said that he had heard that anti-smoking groups had complained about Sega's use of Marlboro logos, and added, "Personally, I wonder why they don't protest the many, many advertisements by U.S. tobacco companies on Japanese television that could strongly influence our young people."

Richards, who is president of an activist physicians' group called Doctors Ought to Care, said he finds it hard to believe that the Marlboro signs got into video games by accident.