

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Marissa Sandgren, 503-453-0509, [media@networkadvertising.org](mailto:media@networkadvertising.org)

## **NAI Code Provides Foundation for Using Data to Fight Coronavirus While Protecting Privacy**

*NAI President and CEO Tells Senate Commerce Committee Privacy is a Priority Even During Crisis*

**WASHINGTON, DC** (April 9, 2020) - In testimony [submitted today](#) to the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, Network Advertising Initiative (NAI) President and CEO Leigh Freund highlighted the [NAI Code of Conduct](#) as a foundational guide to minimize privacy risks as companies share aggregated and anonymized data to help public health authorities better understand the spread of the coronavirus.

"During this public health emergency, NAI member companies are referring to the principles in the Code of Conduct. It helps them make decisions about how to use data to assist public health officials and researchers better respond to the coronavirus pandemic without sacrificing important privacy protections," said Freund. "These fundamental principles allow society to benefit from the use of data while keeping privacy protections in place for the future."

Freund was invited to testify at a full Senate Commerce Committee paper hearing titled, "Enlisting Big Data in the Fight Against Coronavirus." Witness testimony was published by the committee on Thursday, April 9, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. Questions from committee members will be posted by the end of the day, and witnesses will have 96 business hours to respond.

While the NAI Code of Conduct and accountability program are designed to govern the collection and use of data for advertising and marketing purposes, the Code also provides a privacy-protective foundation for companies utilizing data to promote societal benefits, such as mitigating the harmful outcomes of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

Public health officials and researchers are eager to use aggregate and anonymized data to help model and track the spread of the novel coronavirus, much of which can be gleaned from location-based features offered by mobile devices and apps.

"The NAI is proud to have member companies who are using aggregate and anonymized data to help public health agencies fight the coronavirus," said Freund. "These efforts will help protect American lives, minimize the impact that stay-at-home orders are having on our economy and the well-being of many Americans, and implement and evaluate measures to limit the spread of COVID-19."

Questions around how data is used during the coronavirus response also illustrate the need for a comprehensive national data privacy law that clearly defines and makes

illegal practices that may harm consumers. The law should encourage the use of aggregate or anonymized data for research purposes, and create guidelines to ensure that companies and governments balance the societal benefits of data shared for the public good with guardrails to prevent harms to privacy and civil liberties.

###

### **About the NAI**

The NAI is a non-profit organization and the leading self-regulatory association dedicated to responsible data collection and its use for third-party digital advertising. Since 2000, we have been working with the leaders in online advertising to craft industry standards and policies to promote consumer privacy and trust in across the digital advertising ecosystem. Almost every Internet ad served in the United States involves the technology of one or more of the NAI's over 100 member companies. Together, these companies form the backbone of the thriving and diverse market of ad-supported free content and services. Additional information can be found at [networkadvertising.org](http://networkadvertising.org).