3 Opting out

Learning objective
Children will become aware of how to ‘opt out’. They will understand that information they provide could be used for a variety of purposes.

Resources
Mail order catalogues and junk mail collected by children in the week before the lesson; paper, pens and pencils, PowerPoint 3: Opting out.

Introduction
As a class consider each of the PowerPoint slides and discuss what ticking the box means. Explain that many companies say they will use the information that customers supply unless it is forbidden by the customer. Sometimes this is done by ticking a box. Look at the way the box is hidden within the ‘Ublue Company Terms and Conditions’.

Activity A
Encourage children to research the use of ‘opt out’ boxes within the junk mail and catalogues they have collected. How hidden are the boxes? Are any lost within small print? Do any catalogues ask their customers to ‘opt in’ rather than ‘opt out’? Which companies say information will be used unless the customer states, in writing, they do not wish their information to be passed on? Where in the companies’ information is this written?

Activity B
Tell the children that a computer company is launching a new site for children. Ask the children to design a ‘joining form’ that asks children for appropriate information. Say that the company might pass on children’s details to other companies. Using the information from their research, challenge the children to make a ‘user-friendly’ form that encourages children to tick or not tick the ‘opt out or in’ box based on knowledge.
Plenary

Look at the children’s designs for joining forms. Explain that some companies do act responsibly. Discuss the need to take decisions based on knowledge. For example, some people may wish to receive further information so may choose not to opt out. What is vital, however, is that people are aware of to whom their information may be passed on. Stress that talking to parents is always useful when considering whether to pass on information.

Extension

Some websites also ask for personal information and may pass it on to other companies unless the customer has ‘opted out’. Discuss what information it may be appropriate to provide when purchasing items such as clothing, games or books and what should not be given.