

Wife-for-Sale on Brazilian eBay Causes Commotion

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The Brazilian government has appealed to Conar (Self-Regulation Advertising Council) so that that bureau punishes Brazil's eBay, the Mercado Livre site, for allowing an ad in which the author describes himself as a man trying to sell his own wife. The individual, who signs as Breno Bonin, asks a mere 100 reais (US\$ 50) for the spouse, whom he calls "very good in bed and great in the kitchen."

Nilcéa Freire, Brazil's secretary for Women Policies, didn't think the ad, which has already been pulled out by the auction site, was funny. She denounced the posting as offensive and a booster for the idea that women are objects that can be manipulated by men.

"The ad goes counter the ethic of our society," she said, Mercado Livre was also told by her secretariat that it was violating a Brazilian law which bans the sale of "human organs, people, blood, bones or skin."

"I sell my wife, in almost mint condition," read the ad's title. Breno goes on to say that he is selling his wife called Neuza "for reasons I prefer to keep short ... I really need the money." The ad included a picture and some measurements: 5 feet 3 inches, 143 lbs, blonde." And a list of attributes:

"Very good in bed, great in the kitchen, she cleans the house like a pro, she never had children, doesn't have problem with sex and hasn't reached menopause and is only 35 years old." The ad ends up by saying that the author will want to buy the wife back when his economic situation gets better.

Mercado Livre released a note where it says that it is always on the lookout for inappropriate and offensive material like that and that its policy is to take it down as soon as it spots it. The site also explained that the huge number of products it offers - about one million according to the company - makes it impossible for them to censor this kind of material in real time.

At Conar, the bureau's press office informed that they are already examining what has happened and what kind of measures they might take against Mercado Livre, which is owned in part by US-based company eBay.

Despite all the fresh furor, a Google search shows that in July of 2005 the same Mercado Livre site had shown apparently the same ad, in which even the name of the alleged wife was the same: Neuza.

A posting from July 24, 2005, on pererecalovewoman.blogspot.com starts with the headline: "The Proof that Mercado Livre is not a serious site." The note goes on to list a Mercado Livre website page followed by a copy-and-paste job that

includes:

"I sell my wife for reasons I prefer to keep short ... I really need the money.... She accepted the idea of being sold as long as she gets to know the buyer before he makes the purchase....1,60 meters, 65 kilos, blonde, curly hair, beautiful white smile, brown eyes.

"Very good in bed, great in the kitchen, cleans the house beautifully, never had children, has no problem with sex and hasn't entered menopause yet. She is only 35. Her name is Neuza and she's a golden wife. PS: After I get money I wish to buy her back."

As the old Lavoisier's law states: "Nothing is lost, nothing is created, all is transformed."