

Fri day, May 27, 2016

Marlene Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Subject: Protect the Privacy of Customers of Broadband and Other Telecommunications Services (WC Docket No. 16-106)

Dear FCC Secretary Dortch,

I strongly support enactment of strong regulations protecting the privacy of consumers of broadband Internet access service (BIAS) providers and support the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proposed rules that would allow each of us to make informed choices about whether our personal information and data collected about us is used and shared by our broadband internet service providers (ISPs).

Internet providers have unrivaled access to consumer information, including names, addresses, and data about our Web searches and site visits, which can reveal our health conditions, political views, shopping interests, and much more. That is private information. I don't want a BIAS provider to share it with strangers without my permission. The privacy requirements of the Communications Act should apply to broadband internet service providers. As phone customers, we've benefited for many years from the FCC's enforceable privacy rules. Customers also should have strong privacy rights when accessing the internet.

When we use the internet at home or on our mobile phones, we reveal very personal information and we want to be able to trust that it is handled with the utmost care and according to our individual preferences. ISPs see and collect information about what their customers do and where they go on the internet. They track our online activities, the websites we visit and the browsers and apps we use. They collect and retain this information. Even when data is encrypted, broadband providers can still see the websites we visit, how often we visit them, and the amount of time we spend there. ISPs can see and collect a lot of information about us, including highly sensitive details most people wouldn't want to share, such as health and financial issues. When we sign up for broadband service, we pay for a fast, reliable Internet connection. We don't give a license to the broadband provider to snoop into our personal lives, or to share our information with marketing partners, data resellers and aggregators, and other strangers. We may not be able to change the judgments ISPs make about our online habits, but we should be able to choose who has access to that personal information.

We can switch websites, browsers, search engines, or apps, but it's next to impossible to hide from our internet service providers or mobile broadband carriers.

I want the FCC to set rules to give us control over how our personal information is used and shared by our broadband service providers. I generally agree with the principles outlined by the FCC to protect the privacy of internet service company customers:

- * Consumers have the right to control the personal data their broadband provider collects about them and how and when it shares their personal information with third parties or affiliated companies.
- * Consumers deserve to know what information is being collected about them, how it's being used and why it will be shared with other entities. The provider's privacy practices should be easily available, written in a clear way and linked to a user-friendly opt-out and preference page.
- * Broadband providers have a responsibility to protect information about consumers as it travels across their networks and when they store it.

It's our data--not the company's. I understand that when one does business with an internet service provider, it needs to share limited information about customers

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with certain other companies to provide service and prepare billing statements. But we should have control over how our information is used for anything other than providing service--both for what the FCC calls "communications-related services" as well as advertising and all other uses.

I urge the FCC to prevent all use of customer data (except for providing service) without specific opt-in permission from customers. Customers' private information should not be used or shared for other purposes without their express, affirmative "opt-in" consent. "Opting out" is not a good way to handle privacy preferences. If a customer wants to receive information about communications-related or any other services, they will opt in. Let customers make that individual choice--not the company.

The ability of companies and marketers to track us across all of our devices creates an urgent need for stronger privacy and security safeguards. I call on the FCC to do everything within its power to ensure that companies don't snare consumers to wittingly or unwittingly give up their privacy rights in exchange for free services or devices.

- * Consent mechanisms must not trick or coerce consumers.
- * Consent must be verifiable and revocable by consumers at any time.
- * ISPs should be obliged to comply fully with a consumer's choice to deny other parties access to his or her personal information.

Strong security protections are crucial to protecting consumers' data from breaches. Privacy should be a standard requirement for all broadband Internet access. A consumer should not pay extra for Internet privacy, nor should a consumer receive any inferior services for utilizing privacy rights.

Privacy is a basic right, not a privilege for those who can afford to pay extra. It goes without saying that ISPs must be required to follow strict rules to safeguard customer information from unauthorized use or disclosure and to take full responsibility for the protection of customer information when it is shared with third parties.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments. Please do NOT add my name to your mailing list. I will learn about future developments on this issue from other sources.

Sincerely,
Christopher Lish
San Rafael, CA