



Office of Commissioner
Alvaro M. Bedoya

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Federal Trade Commission
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

**Statement of Commissioner Alvaro M. Bedoya
Joined by Chair Lina M. Khan and Commissioner Rebecca Kelly Slaughter**

In the Matter of Amazon Alexa (*United States v. Amazon.com, Inc.*)

May 31, 2023

The Commission alleges that when parents asked Amazon to delete their kids' Alexa voice data, the company did not delete all of it. The Commission also alleges that, as a default, Amazon kept child voice recordings indefinitely, in violation of federal law, including a federal child privacy law.

These allegations should set off alarms for any parent. Rightly so. I am writing separately to highlight an equally important aspect of the settlement that should not be overlooked: Amazon's alleged justification for keeping kids' data.

The Commission alleges that Amazon kept kids' data indefinitely to further refine its voice recognition algorithm. Amazon is not alone in apparently seeking to amass data to refine its machine learning models; right now, with the advent of large language models, the tech industry as a whole is sprinting to do the same.

Today's settlement sends a message to all those companies: Machine learning is no excuse to break the law. Claims from businesses that data must be indefinitely retained to improve algorithms do not override legal bans on indefinite retention of data. The data you use to improve your algorithms must be lawfully collected and lawfully retained. Companies would do well to heed this lesson.