

Mobile Cramming Twitter Chat

On April 17, 2013, FTC staff hosted a Twitter chat to discuss the [agency's first mobile cramming case](#). Malini Mithal from the Division of Financial Practices worked with the Office of Public Affairs to answer questions from the @FTC Twitter account. The hashtag was #FTCmobile.

Note: Tweets in their original order (reversed here for ease of reading), and without handles of individuals redacted remain publicly available on Twitter at www.twitter.com/FTC.

Tweets

Hi all, Malini Mithal here, Assistant Director, Division of Financial Practices in FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection. #FTCmobile

I'm taking questions now about the FTC's 1st mobile cramming case. Complaint information here: <http://go.usa.gov/TDXR> #FTCmobile

Q1 MT [REDACTED] how did the crammers get phone numbers without people knowing? Did they purchase a list? #FTCmobile

A1 Consumers complained they had never heard of Wise Media before being charged. They don't know how Wise Media got their number. #FTCmobile

Q2 MT [REDACTED] I'm impressed @FTC calling for #crammers to provide refunds to scam victims. How long could the payback take? #FTCmobile

A2 FTC seeking refunds from court. Time for case to end varies. In landline cases, we've gotten 10s of millions of dollars. #FTCmobile

Q3 MT [REDACTED] Will the FTC seek a preliminary injunction against the mobile crammers? #FTCMobile

A3 We are seeking preliminary relief to stop the cramming immediately & to preserve assets for the victims. #FTCmobile

Q4 MT [REDACTED] What should #consumers look for when checking their #mobile phone bills for #crammers? #FTCmobile

A4 Look for generic sounding services - Wise Media used word "alerts" in billing descriptions. #FTCmobile

A4 Look @ each section of your bill. Wise Media charges appeared in sections called "premium services" & "monthly subscriptions." #FTCmobile

A4 Call your carrier if you see unfamiliar charges. Get more FTC tips here:
<http://go.usa.gov/TW49> #FTCmobile

Q5 MT [REDACTED] #FTCmobile can (or will FCC help you) to get telcos to do a better job stopping cramming?

A5 We are committed to protecting consumers from cramming! #FTCmobile

A5 In addition to this action, we've advocated for carriers to offer consumers' the ability to block all 3rd party charges. #FTCmobile

A5 We are hosting mobile cramming workshop on May 8 to discuss what else can be done to protect consumers. <http://go.usa.gov/TW2w> #FTCmobile

Q6 MT [REDACTED] What's the best way for consumers to protect themselves from mobile cramming charges? #FTCmobile

A6 Consumers can call carriers & see if there is an option to block 3rd party charges. #FTCmobile

A6 Consumers should be careful about giving out number online or to get "free" prizes - crammers can get that info. #FTCmobile

A6 For more tips, see earlier thread on detecting cramming. Q4/A4 #FTCmobile

Q7 MT [REDACTED] Are charges against Wise Media for minors cell phone bills greater than adults bills? #FTCmobile

A7 Wise Media charged \$10 monthly fees. We will share more info as we can. #FTCmobile

Q8 MT [REDACTED] How can we be sure crammers won't snatch up numbers when making purchases online or paying bills on mobile? #FTCmobile

A8 We're concerned 2. Be careful about giving number out online esp if don't know or trust site/biz. Tips: <http://go.usa.gov/TW4> #FTCmobile

A7 Clarification. FTC is a civil law enforcement agency. We are seeking to stop cramming & get refunds for consumers. #FTCmobile

Thanks for sending in such great questions so far! If I missed yours, please resend. #FTCmobile

Q9 MT [REDACTED] Is it possible WM ever used/stole info gathered by a trustworthy biz who sent promo texts to their customers? #FTCmobile

A9 Consumers don't know how Wise Media got their info. #FTCmobile

Q10 MT [REDACTED] Do you happen to know mechanism that Wise MEdia was using to cram people? Corrupting the double opt-in? #FTCmobile

A10 Consumers complained they never heard of Wise Media, so didn't even opt in once!
#FTCmobile

A10 In our landline cramming cases, defendants doctored recordings of calls to make it sound like consumers agreed to charges. #FTCmobile

I have 5 minutes left to chat! Tweet mobile cramming questions to #FTCmobile.

Mobile cramming is serious problem. FTC committed to protecting consumers in this area.
#FTCmobile

I am looking forward to continuing the discussion at our mobile cramming workshop May 8 in DC: <http://go.usa.gov/TW2w> #FTCmobile

Thanks for participating in #FTCmobile. Have a great day!