



Federal Trade Commission
Privacy Impact Assessment

**FTC Public
Informational Websites**

**Reviewed & Updated
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1 System Overview

1.1 Describe the project/system and its purpose.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) relies on multiple public web properties to:

- Inform and engage the public about its mission, activities and cases
- Provide resources to consumers and businesses
- Enable consumers to file complaints and take other actions
- Enable the public to comment on actions and submit FOIA requests
- Enable businesses and practitioners to file required documents electronically

The primary agency website, FTC.gov, is essentially an informational website. It is the main point of entry for access to other FTC public web properties and is the central resource for the agency's public information. Content is stored in and managed with the Drupal content management system by FTC staff. This PIA is for the FTC's informational website and sub-sites, such as consumer and business education websites.

The agency also has a variety of transactional websites that enable the public to perform tasks such as file fraud and identity theft reports and submit phone numbers to the Do Not Call registry. These sites are managed by contractors under the direction of FTC staff and are hosted in environments separate from the FTC's informational website. These sites, most of which gather sensitive PII, have their own separate Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs); all FTC PIAs are available [online](#). The FTC also relies on social media and other third-party digital tools and platforms to execute its communications and outreach. These tools also have their own PIAs that are available online.

FTC informational websites have a variety of content types. Examples of typical content includes legal documents (usually in PDF form) such as case files and rules, as well as policies, press releases, speeches and testimony, articles, video and audio, RSS feeds, datasets, tutorials, educational materials, live webcasts of workshops and press events, and blogs. The public may submit comments to the blogs, but the comments are moderated by FTC staff before posting. Members of the public also may subscribe to a variety of email newsletters and alerts via the GovDelivery system. GovDelivery is a web-based system that manages email subscriptions and delivers emails for various FTC newsletters, blogs, press releases, and other communications, such as email alerts, to subscribers.¹

The informational website presence is comprised of sub-sites with a variety of functions, audiences and owners. Some of these sub-sites are translated into Spanish. The sub-sites listed below are covered by this PIA. Each site's content is managed by the designated FTC Owner.

¹ See the [GovDelivery Communications Management System PIA](#).

FTC INFORMATIONAL WEBSITES COVERED UNDER THIS PIA			
Site Name	Address	Purpose	FTC Owner
FTC Agency Website (English and Spanish)	www.ftc.gov	Agency information and gateway to other FTC websites (informational and transactional)	Office of Public Affairs (Bureaus and Offices contribute their own content)
Consumer Advice (English and Spanish)	www.consumer.ftc.gov	Advice, tips and resources for consumers regarding their rights, fraud and other issues	Division of Consumer and Business Education
Consumer.gov (English and Spanish)	www.consumer.gov	Advice, tips and resources for consumers with literacy challenges	Division of Consumer and Business Education
Military Consumer	www.militaryconsumer.gov	Tips, advice and materials for members of the military	Division of Consumer and Business Education

1.2 What specific legal authority allows for the collection, maintenance, or dissemination of information for this project/system?

The FTC is authorized to disseminate government information and data online by the E-Government Act of 2002, Section 207 and the Digital Government Strategy (May 2012).

The FTC is authorized to disseminate information to consumers in Spanish on its websites by Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for People with Limited English Proficiency (August 2000).

The FTC is authorized to enable the public to publish comments on its websites' blogs by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum on Social Media, Web-Based Interactive Technologies, and the Paperwork Reduction Act (April 2010).

The FTC is authorized to use Google Analytics to collect aggregated, anonymous data about website visitor behavior by the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum OMB M-10-22, Guidance for the Online Use of Web Measurement and Customization Technologies (June 2010) and Executive Order 13571 – Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service (2011).

The FTC Act authorizes the FTC to prevent unfair and deceptive acts and practices in

interstate commerce and, in furtherance of this mission, to gather, compile, and make information available in the public interest. See 15 U.S.C. 45, 46(a), (f).

2 Data Type, Sources, and Use

2.1 Specify in the table below what types of personally identifiable information (PII)² may be collected or maintained in the system/project. Check **all** that apply.

<i>PII Elements: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Specify other categories of PII as needed.</i>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Biometric Identifiers (e.g., fingerprint, voiceprint)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> User ID
<input type="checkbox"/> Date of Birth	<input type="checkbox"/> Audio Recordings	<input type="checkbox"/> Internet Cookie Containing PII
<input type="checkbox"/> Home Address	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Identifiers (e.g., image, x-ray, video)	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment Status, History, or Information
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phone Number(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates (e.g., birth, death, marriage, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Employee Identification Number (EIN)
<input type="checkbox"/> Place of Birth	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal Documents, Records, Notes (e.g., divorce decree, criminal records, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Salary
<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Identifiers (e.g., license plates)	<input type="checkbox"/> Military Status/Records/ ID Number
<input type="checkbox"/> Race/ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Information (e.g., account number, PINs, passwords, credit report, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IP/MAC Address
<input type="checkbox"/> Alias	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geolocation Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigation Report or Database
<input type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Passport Number	<input type="checkbox"/> Driver's License/State ID Number (or foreign country equivalent)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email Address		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>Please Specify</i>): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Work Address		
<input type="checkbox"/> Taxpayer ID		
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card Number		
<input type="checkbox"/> Facsimile Number		
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Information		
<input type="checkbox"/> Education Records		
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Number		
<input type="checkbox"/> Mother's Maiden Name		

The other types of PII collection include the following:

- **Blog Comments:** A member of the public who submits a comment to a blog on an FTC website will publish their comment and a self-selected username. The blog commenting policy advises users who choose to comment not to include personal information in their comments. If they do so, the FTC staffer moderating the blog can remove this information before publishing the comment or can opt not to publish it.
- **Web Forms:** Forms hosted in our Drupal web content management system may be created to enable the public to more easily share information and make requests of the FTC. An example is a simple form to enable the public to RSVP to attend an FTC event. The data collected by these forms is for a very brief moment stored in the Drupal system before being emailed to FTC staff for them to manage or route as appropriate. The data is deleted as soon as the email is sent, and the database table is purged each night to ensure it is empty. The data collected by the form may

² Per OMB Circular A-130, personally identifiable information (PII) means information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, either alone or when combined with other information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual.

include PII such as name, address, phone and email address.

- **Emails:** The FTC publishes a variety of email addresses, e.g. webmaster@FTC.gov on its websites for the purposes of allowing the public to provide comments and make requests. These emails are received and stored in the FTC's email system for 45 days. They are forwarded to the appropriate Bureau or Office for disposition and response if necessary.
- **IP Addresses:** The web servers routinely capture in log files session information from computers and devices that visit FTC websites. This includes IP addresses, date, time, duration of session, referrer, entry and exit pages, browser, and operating system. The purpose of this data collection is to enable technical and security staff to analyze the performance and security of these systems and is used for support for internal operations of the FTC's websites. This information is routinely deleted after six months.
- **Event Registration:** In support of its general law enforcement, rulemaking, and community education and outreach programs, the FTC conducts workshops, seminars, and events. The FTC webpages for these events sometimes include an FTC e-mail address or web form for individuals who wish to register voluntarily in advance of the event. Individuals are asked to provide only basic information, such as name, e-mail, and telephone number.
- **Community Engagement Projects:** In support of its education and outreach programs, the FTC occasionally invites the public to submit stories, comments, or other feedback that may be shared in whole or in part with other members of the public. For these projects, the FTC creates webpages with submission and content instructions, which include a Privacy Act statement and a link to the FTC's Privacy Policy. Individuals who choose to participate may be asked to provide basic information, such as name and e-mail address, along with their submission. This PII is used by the organizers to identify and process submissions, and, if necessary, to follow up with submitters.
- **API Key:** The FTC makes some of its data and content available to the public and developers via an Application Programming Interface (API). To access the API endpoints, developers must register for an API key provided by data.gov, a government-wide website and service managed by the General Services Administration (GSA). Developers must submit the following PII to data.gov: first and last name and their email address. See [FTC for Developers](#).

2.2 What types of information other than PII will be collected, disseminated, or maintained by the project/system? Provide a general description below and be sure to include all data elements.

The FTC publishes a huge range of content in connection with its mission, activities, and outreach. The following items could contain PII:

- **Staff Biographies and Testimonials:** Biographies, including photos, are published on the website for the Commissioners, senior staff, and other agency staff. Video and text testimonials from FTC staff about working at the FTC are also published on the website.

- Workshop and Event Videos: FTC archives its live webcasts. Workshops feature FTC staff and the public (as speakers/presenters) so these participants are identifiable in the videos.
- Case Studies: Some consumer stories are used as case studies to educate others about the dangers of certain scams or fraud. These individuals are sometimes named and are featured in videos that are available on the web.
- Case Proceedings: The FTC sometimes takes actions against individuals, who are named in case materials (including press releases), that are published on the web.

2.3 What is the purpose for collection of the information listed above?

See Section 2.2.

2.4 What are the sources of the information in the system/project? How is the information collected?

<i>Source of Data</i>	<i>Type of Data Provided & How It Is Collected</i>
Individual members of the public	A member of the public who submits a comment to a blog on an FTC website will publish their comment and a self-selected username. The submission is reviewed by an FTC staff moderating the blog before publishing. The blog commenting policy advises users who choose to comment not to include personal information in their comments. If they do so, the FTC staffer moderating the blog can remove this information before publishing the comment or can opt not to publish it.
Individual members of the public	The FTC conducts workshops, seminars, and events in support of its law enforcement, rulemaking, and community education and outreach programs. The FTC webpages for these events may include an FTC email address for individuals who wish to register voluntarily in advance of the event. Individuals are asked to provide only basic information, such as name, email, and telephone number.
Individual members of the public	Individuals who choose to participate in a community engagement project in support of FTC education and outreach programs may be asked to provide basic information, such as name and email address, along with their stories, comments, or other feedback. This PII is used by the organizers to identify and process submissions and, if necessary, to follow up with submitters.
Individual members of the public	Developers who want to access the FTC's API endpoints must register for an API key provided by data.gov. They must provide first and last name and their email address.
Individual members of the public	The FTC publishes a variety of email addresses, e.g. webmaster@FTC.gov , on its websites for the purposes of allowing the public to provide comments and make requests.

<i>Source of Data</i>	<i>Type of Data Provided & How It Is Collected</i>
	These emails are received and stored in the FTC's email system for 45 days. They are forwarded to the appropriate Bureau or Office for disposition and response.
Computers or devices used by individual members of the public	The web servers routinely capture in log files session information from computers and devices that visit FTC websites. This includes IP addresses, date, time, duration of session, referrer, entry and exit pages, browser, and operating system. The purpose of this data collection is to enable technical and security staff to analyze the performance and security of these systems and is used for support for internal operations of the FTC's websites.
FTC Personnel	FTC administrator login credentials are submitted by staff who post blog entries, moderate blog comments, or manage website content.

3 Data Access and Sharing

3.1 In the table below, specify the systems/applications and groups (both FTC and non- FTC) that will have access to or share data in the system/project.

<i>Data Will Be Accessed By and/or Provided To:</i>	<i>How and Why the Data Will Be Accessed/Shared</i>
FTC Staff	<p>Blog Comments: FTC staff will view the original submission from the public and determine whether the post should be published. A limited number of FTC administrators will have authorization to post blog entries, moderate blog comments, or manage website content.</p> <p>Form Data: FTC staff will review the data and manage and route it per the particular office's procedures.</p> <p>Emails: FTC staff will review emails from the public to provide a response. A limited number of FTC staff will monitor the email accounts.</p> <p>IP Addresses: FTC staff will review web server log files to identify any performance issues or security risks.</p>
Contegix, U Group, FTC Staff	IP Address: Contegix provides web hosting services to the FTC, and U Group manages the Drupal web content management system. The staff of both vendors have access to the server and application log files for the purposes of optimizing performance and identifying security risks. FTC staff may also access the log files to investigate incidents. U Group staff has access to all content in the Drupal databases, including any PII in those databases, as well as API key registration information.
Helpdesk Vendor	Emails: The Helpdesk staff has access to all Outlook email boxes so they are able to see public emails.

<i>Data Will Be Accessed By and/or Provided To:</i>	<i>How and Why the Data Will Be Accessed/Shared</i>
Data.gov staff (GSA and/or its contractors)	Data.gov manages the API key that developers must obtain in order to access and use the FTC’s API endpoints. Managers of the data.gov API key will have access to the PII submitted by developers.

3.2 Do contractors and/or third party service providers have access to data in the project/system? If yes, explain what privacy requirements are in place to ensure that data is properly protected.

Yes. Contractors working on FTC systems and who have access to data undergo security clearances. Access to systems is tightly controlled and is provided after multiple FTC staff have reviewed the request and approved access. Contractors are required to complete the FTC’s IT security and privacy training before obtaining access to the FTC network and systems and certify on an annual basis thereafter.

3.3 If you answered “yes” to 3.2, describe the privacy incident response plan maintained by the contractor’s organization or third party service provider.

Contegix has implemented an incident response plan for its Platform as a Service (PaaS) Cloud environment, which includes Preparation, Detection/Analysis, Containment Eradication and Recovery, and Post Incident Activity. Eradication steps are in place, which include account disabling, password change, patching, software/virus removal, and network perimeter enhancement. Contegix’s cloud also undergoes annual assessments and reviews for privacy and security risks.

4 Notice and Consent

As described in Section 1.1, the primary purpose of FTC.gov, and its associated sites, is to provide information to members of the public about the FTC’s mission-related activities. The limited PII collected by www.ftc.gov generally is obtained directly from visitors to the site. Individuals may submit information voluntarily through blog comments or emails provided to the FTC for a variety of reasons. In addition, the FTC’s web servers routinely capture IP address for security and site operations purposes, as described in Section 2.1 above. FTC websites that gather sensitive PII, or collect PII through other means – such as third party websites or applications – have their own PIAs and are therefore not covered by this document.

4.1 How are individuals provided with notice prior to the collection of their PII? If notice is not provided, explain why.

Notice is provided via (*check all that apply*):

Privacy Act Statement (Written Oral)

FTC Website Privacy Policy

Privacy Notice (e.g., on Social Media platforms)

Login banner

Other (*explain*):

Blogs on FTC websites link to a Comment Policy that informs participants that all comments are reviewed before they are posted; that they can be edited to remove personal information or links to commercial websites; and that published comments are part of the public domain. See <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/comment-policy>.

Notice is not provided explain): _____

4.2 Do individuals have the opportunity to decline to provide information or to consent to particular uses of their information (other than required or authorized uses)?

Individuals have the option to provide blog comments or to send an email to the FTC. They cannot decline the automatic collection of technical information from their computer or device recorded in the web server's log files when individuals visit the FTC websites. Developers cannot use the API key without providing their contact information.

Visitors who wish to opt-out of Google Analytics tracking can find step-by-step instructions for changing their settings at http://www.usa.gov/optout_instructions.shtml. Google also provides a browser plug-in that will allow visitors to opt-out of all Google Analytics measurements, which can be found [here](#).

4.3 Are there procedures in place to allow individuals access to their personally identifiable information? Explain.

Individuals can view their blog posts and have copies of any email they send to the FTC in their email system's outbox.

Individuals who seek access to nonpublic records, if any, collected by the blog about themselves must submit such a request in writing to the FTC's Office of General Counsel, under the agency's [Privacy Act access procedures](#).

Developers can contact the FTC about access to their contact information related to the API key.

4.4 Are there procedures in place to allow individuals the ability to correct inaccurate or erroneous information? What is the process for receiving and responding to complaints, concerns, or questions from individuals? Explain.

Individuals can contact the FTC about correcting a blog post comment or can post a new comment to correct the original post. Individuals can email the FTC as a follow-up.

Developers can contact the FTC about correcting their contact information related to their registration for the API key.

5 Data Accuracy and Security

5.1 Are there procedures in place to ensure that the information maintained is accurate, complete, and up-to-date?

To ensure accuracy, completeness, and currency, users can see their comments once they are approved and posted, and can submit a follow-up comment to provide clarification. Likewise, for PII that is collected through the agency's Web site but not subject to public posting, individuals may always follow up with more accurate, complete and up-to-date information, if necessary. Accordingly, the FTC does not validate any PII that may be submitted through user comments.

All site visitors agree to the automatic collection of web log information, as described in the FTC privacy policy. Log data is used for website analytic purposes and is not verified for accuracy.

5.2 Are there administrative procedures and technical safeguards in place to protect the data in the system/project? What controls are in place to ensure proper use of the data? Please specify.

Controls and safeguards are in place for protection of sensitive data. Contegix, the FTC's web hosting vendor, implements two-factor authentication for administrators to the SecureCloud environment, which maintains a FedRAMP ATO. Least privilege authorizations are implemented providing only the necessary access rights to authorized users. The Contegix Network Operations Center also performs 24x7x365 monitoring.

Secure destruction and disposal of data is implemented using data erasure, degaussing, and/or physical shredding. Encryption is in place using FIPS 140-2 AES-256. Transmissions of page requests are encrypted using HTTPS via TLS. Security controls are also reviewed and assessed on an annual basis and risk assessments are performed.

Access to the Drupal web content management system is via two-factor authentication. Users must be authorized to access the system by their supervisor or COR if a contractor. Accounts are permanently blocked when the individual leaves the FTC, no longer needs access, or is no longer an FTC contractor.

5.3 Is PII used in the course of system testing, training, or research? If so, what steps are taken to minimize and protect PII during this process?

Not Applicable. PII is not used in the course of testing, training, or research for www.ftc.gov.

6 Data Retention and Disposal

6.1 Specify the period of time that data is retained in the system/project. What are the specific procedures for disposing of the data at the end of the retention period?

The current policy for blog posts and comments is to retain them on the website in the blog archive until the agency determines they are no longer required for public information or preservation purposes.

Data collected by web forms is momentarily stored in the Drupal system before being emailed to FTC staff for them to manage or route as appropriate. The data is deleted from Drupal's repository as soon as the email is sent, and the database table is purged each night to ensure it is empty.

Contegix implements R1Soft and Commvault which perform block-level backups. No data is decrypted for back-up purposes, and the original encryption applied to the data source is maintained on the backup. Retention of backup data is maintained for 60 days at the PaaS layer and 30 days at the SaaS layer. Dates and records are maintained for backup and disposal information. For disposal, data erasure using a DOD-short compliant overwrite wipe is used. Degaussing also is available to demagnetize electronic storage media. Physical shredding methods are also implemented for physical media that must be destroyed.

7 Website Privacy Evaluation

7.1 Does the project/system employ the use of a website? If so, describe any tracking technology used by the website and whether the technology is persistent or temporary (e.g., session cookie, persistent cookie, web beacon). Describe the purpose of using such tracking technology.

The FTC's websites, including FTC.gov and its blogs, participate in the General Service Administration's (GSA's) Federal Digital Analytics Program (DAP), which uses a Federal government-specific version of Google Analytics 360 to collect and analyze data from website visitors to help the FTC improve its websites, share FTC information more effectively, and create a more engaging experience for website visitors. The data is also aggregated at the federal level to enable a government-wide snapshot of web traffic to all

.gov sites running DAP. The FTC also maintains several other Google Analytics accounts which provide additional visitor data such as file downloads and social sharing, which is not included in the DAP.

In conjunction with Google Analytics, the FTC also uses Google Tag Manager (GTM) to analyze aggregate customer behavior and usage in order to improve FTC websites’ content and functionality. Like Google Analytics, GTM does not collect PII and provides fully anonymized data that cannot be linked to individuals. It does not require a new cookie, but relies on the existing Google Analytics cookie to function. GSA has approved the use of GTM with federal DAP accounts.

In addition to the Digital Analytics Program, the FTC also uses temporary (“session”) cookies on FTC microsites, blogs, and tools to track information such as user IDs and preferences while the user is on an FTC site. The session cookies provide a particular functionality and/or a more streamlined experience for the user. For more information about cookies and the information that the FTC collects when you visit an FTC site, see the [FTC’s Privacy Policy](#) and [Cookie Page](#).

8 Privacy Risks and Evaluation

8.1 Considering the type of information collected and sources of collection, what privacy risks were identified and how were these risks mitigated?

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation Strategy</i>
Sensitive personal information such as a Social Security number is submitted in blog post	All blog comments are reviewed by a moderator (an FTC staffer) before they are published to the website. If someone submits a post with sensitive information, the moderator deletes the information from the comment before publishing it.
Sensitive information such as a Social Security number is submitted in an email sent to the FTC	Emails from the public are reviewed by FTC staff. Sensitive information is removed from the email before it is forwarded to anyone for action.
Unauthorized access to the content management system	Only a small number of FTC employees have login credentials and password protected access to the content management system. Users must request access via a form signed by their supervisor, use two-factor authentication, and are required to change their password every 60 days.

8.2 Does the project/system employ the use of automated privacy controls or enhanced capabilities designed to support privacy? Explain.

Yes. The content management system times out after 60 minutes of inactivity, so the FTC user has to log back in to proceed. The system performs logging for content revisions and custom logging when permissions are changed.

Site visitors must complete a captcha before they can submit a blog comment for posting or submit data via a webform. This prevents online spammers from spamming the comment section or abusing the form.

8.3 Has a Privacy Act System of Records Notice (SORN) been published in the Federal Register for this system/project? If so, list the applicable SORN(s).

To the extent, if any, that information about an individual is retrieved by a personal identifier, the electronic collection and storage of public records is covered by existing Privacy Act System of Records Notices (SORNs). The FTC's SORN for Public Records (I-6) covers the storage of such public records.³ For Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, refer to the FOIAXpress Privacy Impact Assessment.⁴

8.4 How does the project/system ensure that the information is collected, used, stored, or disseminated in accordance with stated practices in this PIA?

Blogs: Staff in the Division of Consumer and Business Education and in the Office of Public Affairs ensure that comments submitted by the public are reviewed before they are published and that policies and procedures are followed. Access restrictions permit only authorized staff (e.g. administrators, site builders, web content managers) to moderate, edit, and publish the comments.

Webforms: Only authorized FTC staff have access to the data collected and emailed by forms on FTC websites. The data collected is emailed only to FTC email accounts.

Emails: Only authorized FTC staff have access to the email accounts used to receive and manage emails from the public.

Log Files: Only authorized contractors and FTC staff have access to webserver log files.

³ All of the FTC's SORNs are on the [public SORN page](#).

⁴ All FTC PIAs are available [online](#). Previously, the FTC collected public comments via the FOIAXpress portal. Public comments are currently submitted and collected through the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) on regulations.gov. For more information, see <https://www.ftc.gov/policy/public-comments>. See FDMS PIA available [here](#).