

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION**

COMMISSIONERS: **Edith Ramirez, Chairwoman**
Julie Brill
Maureen K. Ohlhausen
Terrell McSweeny

COMPLAINT

The Federal Trade Commission, having reason to believe that Inbox Group, LLC, a limited liability company, has violated the Federal Trade Commission Act (“FTC Act”), and it appearing to the Commission that this proceeding is in the public interest, alleges:

1. Respondent Inbox Group, LLC is a Texas limited liability company with its principal office or place of business at 2400 Crockett Court, Grapevine, Texas 76051.
 2. Respondent is a marketing agency that provides email, social media, and mobile marketing programs and services.
 3. The acts and practices of respondent as alleged in this complaint have been in or affecting commerce, as “commerce” is defined in Section 4 of the FTC Act.
 4. Respondent has set forth on its website, <http://www.inboxgroup.com/company/privacy/>, privacy policies and statements about its practices, including statements related to its participation in the Safe Harbor privacy framework agreed upon by the U.S. and the European Union (“U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework”).

The Framework

5. The U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework provides a method for U.S. companies to transfer personal data outside of Europe that is consistent with the requirements of the European Union Directive on Data Protection (“Directive”). Enacted in 1995, the Directive sets forth European Union (“EU”) requirements for privacy and the protection of personal data. Among other things, it requires EU Member States to implement legislation that prohibits the transfer of personal data outside the EU, with exceptions, unless the European Commission (“EC”) has made a

determination that the recipient jurisdiction's laws ensure the protection of such personal data. This determination is referred to commonly as meeting the EU's "adequacy" standard.

6. To satisfy the EU adequacy standard for certain commercial transfers, the U.S. Department of Commerce ("Commerce") and the EC negotiated the U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework, which went into effect in 2000. The U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework allows U.S. companies to transfer personal data lawfully from the EU. To join the U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework, a company must self-certify to Commerce that it complies with seven principles and related requirements that have been deemed to meet the EU's adequacy standard.

7. Companies under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Federal Trade Commission ("FTC"), as well as the U.S. Department of Transportation, are eligible to join the U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework. A company under the FTC's jurisdiction that claims it has self-certified to the Safe Harbor principles, but failed to self-certify to Commerce, may be subject to an enforcement action based on the FTC's deception authority under Section 5 of the FTC Act.

8. Commerce maintains a public website, www.export.gov/safeharbor, where it posts the names of companies that have self-certified to the U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework. The listing of companies indicates whether their self-certification is "current" or "not current" and a date when recertification is due. Companies are required to re-certify every year in order to retain their status as "current" members of the Safe Harbor Framework.

Violations of Section 5 of the FTC Act

9. Since at least January 2015, respondent has disseminated or caused to be disseminated privacy policies and statements on the <http://www.inboxgroup.com/company/privacy> website, including, but not limited to, the following statements:

Safe Harbor Compliance

Inbox Group has certified its compliance with the standards of the Safe Harbor Principles developed by the U.S. Department of Commerce for the **regulation of data transfers between the European Union and the United States**. This Policy and Inbox Group's information handling practices described in this Policy comply with the Safe Harbor privacy Principles. (some emphasis added)

10. Through the means described in Paragraph 9, respondent has represented, expressly or by implication, that it is a "current" participant in the U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework.

11. In truth and in fact, respondent is not and never has been a participant in the U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework. Therefore, the representation set forth in Paragraph 10 was, and is, false and misleading.

12. The acts and practices of respondent as alleged in this complaint constitute deceptive acts or practices, in or affecting commerce, in violation of Section 5(a) of the Federal Trade Commission Act.

THEREFORE, the Federal Trade Commission this twenty- ninth day of September 2015, has issued this complaint against respondents.

By the Commission.

Donald S. Clark
Secretary

SEAL: