

Nicola Page

August 11, 2018

Federal Trade Commission
Office of the Secretary
600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Suite CC-5610 (Annex C)
Washington, DC 20580

Re: Competition and Consumer Protection in the 21st Century Hearing, Project Number P181201

I believe that we should have privacy for our data in America. I am in IT, and in my work, I see how our data privacy compares to Europe's. I have found that in the States, Big Business has more control over things. US citizens don't have many personal rights. Without a doubt, we need more rights when it comes to how our personal data is collected and used.

Nearly everything we do online generates data that companies are harvesting and selling. I don't think it's any of these companies' business what I'm doing online. For instance, when you buy something from a website, and then you go to weather.com, there is an ad for that store or product. That's an invasion of privacy. I believe we should have a say in whether or not that kind of thing happens.

I frequently use Google, Google Maps, and Gmail, and I did not read these services' terms and conditions. Part of the problem is that they are lengthy, and they are also too difficult for the average person to understand. It's just not worth it. Even if I do read the terms and conditions section of such services, I wouldn't understand it properly because of the legalese. It should be much more transparent what data an app or service is going to use.

I recall hearing about the Equifax data breach and that customers' information had been sold. I think our laws should be harsher for companies who have data breaches. They should have to admit to what happened within a specific amount of time. They should also be punished because it's their lax security that is letting these things abound.

Further, I worry about certain political viewpoints being silenced online, as YouTube has done in the past. Allowing that kind of thing to continue would nullify our democracy. We can't live with someone controlling what message gets out there. We need a free and open press to let people say what they want to say.

Additionally, Google's Android phones have been tracking users pervasively--even though they had turned off the location function. To me, that is not surprising, but it is still upsetting. I don't think it's right. Besides the fact that they're taking that information, it could be used in a court of law without my consent. That is yet another violation of our rights and privacy.

I don't think it's fair that I can't use these services unless I consent to their terms. If we are going to have to do so, then I want these companies to be required to make the terms more understandable and to be clearer about how our data is used. In the meantime, they are holding us captive by using our data and doing whatever they want with it. That's the price we are paying.

Sincerely,

Nicola Page