

August 6, 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

If I give somebody online my email address, before I know it I am getting emails from all kinds of companies that I don't even care about. They just overwhelm my computer. I just took 250 emails off my machine today and it's only the middle of the week. I know I'll have another 250 on there by Sunday. I'm tired of it! Big media companies like Google and Facebook share my data with other companies, but they don't give me a clear enough explanation of the process. It should be up to me who I share my data with.

The average person does not have the expertise or the time to read and understand all the legal language in the disclaimers of these various websites and apps. I don't always read all those terms myself. They are supposedly telling you they will only use your information in certain ways, but I don't know whether I can really trust them.

Before I retired, I was the corporate vice president of a medium-sized manufacturing company. Back before there were computers, mailing services used to sell their lists. I would buy those lists that were pertinent to my business because I didn't have the time to generate them on my own. Back then, things were done by first-class mail where you had some control; you didn't have the computer there to barge into your life. I think that companies like Google should be restricted from selling my data entirely. They don't require it. It should be mandatory that all the data they collect is purged under close surveillance so they don't continue to have access to it.

For such companies, we are the product; by selling our data they are profiting. Just because we can use their services for free, does not give them this right. My data is private and personal. It is nobody else's business. If I choose to deal with a company, then that is my choice. It is not for them to sell my data to a company I don't give a damn about.

It also bothers me that my Android phone is tracking my movements. When I use my smart phone, a map often pops up from Google saying, "You are here." I find that very invasive and annoying. My wife and I both use Facebook, but I don't want to see ads for other sites we've visited showing up there. We like Facebook for watching movies and for sharing with others about our great dog that we got from a shelter. I sometimes use it as my "Encyclopedia Britannica" to quickly get information about different topics. It would be difficult to go without it "cold turkey."

Consumers need much greater control over what happens with their personal information. The recent data breach at Facebook shows that large media companies are not doing a good job of protecting it. I am pleased that the Federal Trade Commission is aware of this growing problem and is gathering input from real people on how it can be fixed. I look forward to some positive steps to protect my privacy being taken in the near future.

Sincerely,

James Aker



James Aker