

David Swink

August 10, 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 don't believe that prominent media companies like Google should be selling the data they collect from their users for their own corporate gain. I don't think they should be getting into individuals' privacy like that. We should have a say in how our personal information is collected and how it is used. I am hopeful that the Federal Trade Commission will step up and take some positive action now to address this nationwide problem.

The data that organizations like Google, Facebook and Amazon collect is valuable. They sell it to others and make billions of dollars in profit doing so. We don't share in those profits. We often don't even understand fully what it is we have agreed to when we click on the "I Agree" button on these sites. Those lengthy legal descriptions can be difficult to understand. Most people don't read them carefully enough. I don't want to have to give away my personal information to use such sites, so actually I stay away from many of them.

What they are doing is unfair. Who knows if they are even following the rules for distributing user data that they spell out on their sites? What consumers end up with are ads showing up everywhere for sites they never contacted. Their Android phones are tracking them without their knowledge or consent. Google has a stranglehold on much of the market. Even with all the "free" information it is getting from consumers, it still does not play fair. It has even manipulated the results from its search engine to put the sites that benefit it at the top. They know everyone relies on Google to search!

I am also concerned about the security of my data. I know about the Equifax and Facebook data breaches from the news. I was alerted by my insurance carrier, Blue Cross Blue Shield, that some of their clients' data was stolen. They gave me free credit monitoring after that. Although I have not been aware of any problems yet, that doesn't mean it won't happen later. These kinds of incidents just point out the seriousness of the problem. We should not have to worry about who will be getting their hands on our private information. The data we are giving to a company when we agree to their terms of use should be limited and very clear. It should not be sold to others, period.

I have lived in Virginia my entire life. I imagine you have been hearing from many other Virginians and from concerned consumers around the country. Our privacy is not being adequately protected. We look to you to create the stronger rules on data sharing that will make us feel secure.

Sincerely,

David Swink