

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 am sure you are already well aware of the concerns being expressed throughout the country over how media companies like Google collect and sell their users' personal information. I wanted to add my voice to those who are very upset over this practice. Google, Facebook, and other social media companies treat us like we are merely products to be bought and then resold for a profit. They prevent us from using their sites unless we consent first to a lengthy legal disclosure. I do try to read over these, but I doubt that I fully understand all the legal technicalities. I doubt most other people do either.

We are consenting to give away our data and our privacy, but where it is going to be used and how is never made clear. I want to have a say in what happens to the information I give to Google in order to use their search engine, Google Maps, Gmail, or my Android phone. This only seems fair. Because these powerful media giants pretty much control the market, I am *forced* to use them. Trying to live in today's technological world without them would be very challenging. I feel the trade-off I have to make to have access is not a good one. I don't like the feeling that they are watching my every move.

As far as I am aware, I have not been the victim of identity theft or of the data breaches at Equifax or Facebook. Still, I get emails all the time saying that my information has possibly been hacked. I just delete these emails since they are probably scams themselves. It worries me not knowing how these places got my name and my email address in the first place.

Google is trying in many ways to control what I see and what I hear about. They manipulated the results of their own search engine so that sites they favored showed up first. Their subsidiary, YouTube, has censored conservative viewpoints and removed conservative posts from the site. I know that several conservative news personalities have been extremely censored. We need to hear all the viewpoints, not just those that Google decides we can hear.

This is the problem that comes when one organization has a monopoly. Not only can they do what they want with my information, they can control what options I have for obtaining information. Lack of competition is not a good thing. Stopping the current anti-competitive tactics of Google and Facebook would be much better for consumers. I want to have choices. I especially want to have the choice of deciding who can collect and use my personal information. Today's world depends on technology. I don't want to have to give up my privacy to be able to live in it.

Sincerely,

Denise Arthurs

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