

Conny Marlene Walker

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 support any efforts to protect my personal online data. When we are online, there are umpteen consent forms that we routinely click "OK" on because we don't have time to go through them. I fully support better disclosure on the part of companies like Google on how they're using our data, who they're giving it to, and them giving us an option to opt out.

It bothers that I'm not sure how my personal data is used after it is collected. It can be misused. It can be used for good, or it might be used for bad. If I don't have a choice, then I can't evaluate that. It's like going down the street and letting everybody know what's happening in your family--you don't do that because you don't know who you can trust.

When it comes to online data collection, these are the sorts of things I would like to know: Are they getting my email address? Are they getting my alternate email address? If we have multiple phone numbers in the family, then are they getting all of those? What is it that they're linking together? With such a common last name, we keep getting linked to people we don't even know, and I don't have any way to overcome that. We need some control over our own data where we can say, "No, we don't have any connection with this person; please remove them."

These companies should not be able to nitpick every little thing. There should be some parameter on what's reasonable for the company to expect and it should be there for us to read before we sign it. A 10-page document before you use a website is just ridiculous! I would like to know what they're actually collecting and what they're able to see.

Further, Google was recently found to be swaying search results in favor of its own products, leaving out the competition's offerings. If there were more competition, then these companies would be more careful to respect the consumer's wishes. Having competition means they would have to listen. And, competition offers alternatives. For instance, one of my banking apps recently sent me a notification about how they were using my information and I was given a choice to opt out. That is, I didn't *have* to say yes in order to keep using my app--probably because there is enough competition in banking that they want my business!

We have been the victims of identity theft. Once, someone ran up dental bills using my husband's social security number and insurance information. Many years ago, our credit card information was compromised. I took many precautions to protect our identities, such as renting a PO box and using a different email address for socials. I have put up my own barriers. Ten years ago, people thought I was paranoid. Perhaps now it's clear why I was so intent on protecting us. Now, it's time for the FTC to take steps to allow consumers to protect their own data a little better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "C. Walker".

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