

Remarks of  
Federal Trade Commissioner Julie Brill  
at the National Cyber Security Alliance  
Data Privacy Day  
January 26, 2012

event for inviting me. In particular, let me thank the National Cyber Security Alliance an organization committed to ensuring that the online world is a trusted destination.

At the Federal Trade Commission, our mission is to create and promote trusted destinations. We help consumers as they navigate the marketplace, and protect competition as it shapes the economy. Safeguarding consumer privacy is essential to our mission.

Consumers should not have to give up control over their most sensitive data as the toll to enter the information superhighway. The disclosure of personal information such as health, finances, and location can, in some instances, have disturbing consequences.

And exacting such a toll is just bad business: no market can function if consumers feel unsafe participating in it if they believe they have no decisions about how their information is used, or their decisions about what information to share and what to keep private are not respected.

This, of course, is the great challenge of the growing, exciting, and innovative cyber-market, much of it based on the exchange of information, much of that information sensitive and private. Companies that invest in ways to keep online data secure are an important part of the equation in determining whether they meet that challenge.

Real-world examples that make this point like the 24 million Zappos customers, myself included, who are busy changing passwords and will think twice next time they click to buy that perfect pair of black boots. As Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh wrote in an





putting this principle into practice is providing consumers with access to the information about them that a company possesses.

that even know exist like data brokers. These entities control details about consumers that can have a direct impact on their credit, employment status, and financial well-being. We are also seeing entities that combine data from multiple sources, including off line and social networks. We have seen researchers and some companies pull these have long been concerned about data that are used in place of traditional credit reports, to make predictions that become part of the basis for secure housing, gainful employment, or various types of insurance.

predict life expectancy and hence to set rates and coverage the insurers offer for their policies.<sup>2</sup> Analysts are undoubtedly working right now to identify certain Facebook or Twitter

when these analysts offer to sell information scraped from social networks to current and r promotion? Or to the

what ter30049005200556000he<sup>2</sup>

Our data security actions involve companies in a variety of sectors — online retailers, payroll processors, pharmacies, and more. Despite this variety, our message is consistent: companies that fail



I started out my  
think about Julie, t room for improvement.

We can always continue to strive to improve and better implement the principles that we  
have developed to protect the p and to keep the information  
secure.

And as an enforcement body, we also know that, just as my mother said, our work is  
never done. One important area where we continue to make inroads is developing a more robust