FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

2020 Open Government Plan
January 14, 2020

The FTC created its 2020 Open Government Plan in collaboration with senior policy, legal, and technical leadership within the FTC, as well as through conversations with key stakeholders and the general public.

The FTC solicits your input and feedback as it works to improve the Commission's transparency, participation, and collaboration with this Plan. Please send any comments or suggestions to opengov@ftc.gov.

I.   Introduction

The FTC is committed to continuing to improve its transparency and openness. The FTC pos an to

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guidance; statistical data about consumer complaints regarding fraud, identity theft, unw

and other consumer protec373 0.569 scn   0(0(nt)-9   -0.004 Tc 0.004 Tw [(s)-15 (p)-4 (

Process Enforceand public comments

- Improved outreach to and access by consumers via usability improvements to consumer education websites, creation of a website to educate older consumers about scams, and creation of a new consumer education website for the military.

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- Improved public visibility into FTC enforcement actions by adding

- Increased shareability of FTC content by adding social sharing buttons throughout FTC.gov and consumer education sites.
- Prepared a Digital Strategy roadmap for consolidation and improved citizen service of FTC.gov and consumer education websites based on but not limited to citizen focus groups, surveys, metrics and data analysis, and benchmarking.
- Increased reach to citizens during FTC events and workshops by broadcasting them on Facebook Live
- Increased visibility of refunds provided to consumers by publishing [annual consumer refunds report website](#).
- Improved media access to information by streamlining, simplifying and consolidating

The FTC has made and continues to make Commission records available for public inspection by posting certain additional FTC records in its online

handling practices. The URL of the FTC web page(s) where this information is made available to the public is https://www.ftc.gov/site-information/privacy-policy, which includes links to the relevant material. See also FTC Rule 4.13, 16 C.F.R. 4.13 (FTC Privacy Act regulations).

B. Whistleblower Protection

Consistent with 5 U.S.C. 2302(c), which requires that Commission employees be informed of their rights and remedies under applicable Federal civil service and whistleblower laws, the FTC sent its Registration Form for 2302(c) certification to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) on April 8, 2016, and the OSC lists the FTC as registered as of April 16, 2016.

As part of the FTC's compliance with the certification program, the FTC engages in the following activities:

- Posts informational posters about whistleblower protections, retaliation, and Prohibited Personnel Practices (PPPs) at the elevators and throughout its buildings;
- Sends an annual notice via email to all employees on whistleblower protection and PPPs that includes links to information on the OSC website (Your Rights as a Federal Employee, Know Your Rights When Reporting Wrongs, The Role of the U.S. Office of Special Counsel);
- Includes, within the FTC's onboarding orientation materials, information about PPPs, the Merit System Principles, and the rights of employees under the Whistleblower Protection Act;
- Mandates No Fear Act Training for all employees; and
- Provides, on a three-year cycle, supervisors and managers with interactive training on the 13 PPPs and whistleblower rights.

The FTC's Office of Inspector General provides whistleblower protection guidance and information on its web page. This describes and defines protections for whistleblowers, retaliation, protected disclosures, where whistleblower complaints should be made, and provides a link to OSC's website.

C. Website

Since the 2016 plan, the FTC has formed a Web and Digital Communications Council and a Digital Analytics Workgroup to bring together all staff who manage and develop public facing web properties, social media, or other forms of digital content dissemination to the

impacts public .gov websites.

On a regular basis, the FTC will continue to increase the diversity and breadth of its outreach to broaden its audience and increase transparency by embracing increased use of social media, video, audio/podcasting, infographics and additional types of media and platforms. The agency plans to increase the number of API endpoints to facilitate the efficient sharing of its data and information. It is also working to improve its analytics program to gain a better understanding of how to modify its content and outreach to better reach, educate and serve the public.

The link to the Commission's digital strategy can be found at www.ftc.gov/digitalstrategy.

In 2019, the FTC began planning to launch the project ReportFraud.Gov. This project proposes to make significant changes to the FTC Complaint Assistant to increase the functionality of the service provided to consumers on the online site. The redesign will reduce the complexity of the consumer complaint process by using plain and direct language, as well as a simpler interface for categorizing complaints. These enhancements will benefit consumers by providing an easy-to-use interface with access to self-help resources.

D. Open Innovation Methods

The FTC led four public challenges through the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Protect Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Reauthorization Act of 2010 (America COMPETES Act) to help tackle the unlawful robocalls that plague consumers.

In 2012 and 2013, the FTC conducted its first challenge—the FTC Robocall Challenge—and called upon the public to develop a consumer-facing solution that blocks illegal robocalls, applies to landlines and mobile phones, and operates on proprietary and non-proprietary platforms. In response, the FTC received 798 submissions and collaborated with experts in the field to judge the entries. One of the winners, "NomoRobo," was on the market and available to consumers by October 2013—

robocalls. Finalists also demonstrated their solutions to DEF CON 23 attendees. The winning mobile app, RoboKiller, allows users to block and forward unwanted robocalls to a crowd-sourced honeypot.

In August 2017, in response to industry input, the FTC began releasing unwanted call data each weekday. Industry members have noted that FTC data are tremendously important in helping them to adapt their detection and blocking algorithms in real-time. By giving call-blockers the ability to incorporate rapidly this data into their solutions, the FTC has converted consumer complaints into fuel for industry solutions aimed at solving the problem. There are a multitude of call blocking apps, devices, and built-in services to block calls in the marketplace today.

E. Open-Source Software

The FTC relies on the Drupal content management system framework—a free, open-source solution—to manage the content of FTC informational public web properties that do not contain sensitive personally identifiable information. These include FTC.gov (English and Spanish), Consumer Center, Business Center, Free Publications online store, a military consumer website, Spanish versions of websites, and blogs. FTC.gov's site search is powered by the free search.govsearch.gov service from GSA, and the site search for the consumer education websites is powered by Solr, an open source search platform.

F. Spending Information

The FTC has updated its Open Government page to link to the FTC Performance page, which contains updated information about the FTC's Performance Snapshots, Strategic Plans, Agency Financial Reports, Summaries of Performance and Financial Information, Performance Plans and Reports, and the FTC's historical Performance and Accountability Reports.

Contractors conducting business with the FTC are registered in SAM.gov prior to contract award. Generally, members of the public can search SAM.gov to learn more about active and inactive vendors who have done business with the government, or who are preparing to do business with the government, including the FTC.

Contracts awarded at the FTC are reported via the Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation (FPDS-NG) with the appropriate contract values. The system data is cross-referenced with SAM.gov and DUNS information for verification. Data in the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) is made available to the public via a single, searchable website: USAspending.gov.

The FTC transmits, and certifies to the accuracy of, spending data submitted to USAspending.gov, as required under the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA ACT) and related government wide requirements set by OMB and the U.S. Department of Treasury.

G. Participation in Transparency Initiatives

Grants.gov: The FTC does not participate in Grants.Gov because the Commission does not award grants.

CFDA.gov: The FTC does not award or administer grants or federal domestic "assistance" for the purpose of "public support or stimulation" (see "assistance" as defined in the CFDA legislation (31

of Complaints," to the limited extent the FTC makes compliance guides and consumer information available free of charge to businesses and consumers, and is authorized to open law enforcement investigations of complaints filed by consumers, businesses, and other entities (e.g., advocacy groups), as appropriate.

IT Dashboard: The FTC is not among the agencies required to submit data from any Exhibit 53 or 300 for the public IT Dashboard.

eRulemaking: The FTC participates in the eRulemaking initiative, as part of eGov, through its interagency agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency, the lead partner in the initiative. FTC Federal Register Notices seeking public comment in FTC proceedings, such as proposed rules and Commission consent agreements, appear on www.regulations.gov, and the public can submit comments through that site. Most public comments in FTC proceedings are submitted electronically, providing the public a user-friendly way of participating in these proceedings. Raised visibility of and streamlined public comments process for citizens by migrating process to regulations.gov, where public comments are submitted to the FTC and available for public review.

Data.gov: The FTC maintains and frequently updates its webpage dedicated to the datasets it has made public. When the FTC uploads new datasets on the FTC site, it also posts data—such as consumer complaints stats—on Data.gov.

The FTC's Open Government page requests the public to give their thoughts on how the FTC can better develop its Open Government Plan, prioritize information, and improve the availability and quality of information. The FTC asks the community to provide feedback to opengov@ftc.gov.

https://www.nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/trail_ridge_road.htm

H. Public Notice

1. Media

The Commission continues to publish news releases to the FTC.gov website to inform the public about relevant Commission news, resources, and upcoming events including press conferences, press call-ins, proposed and final rulemakings, public comment periods, and workshops. News will initially post to the FTC homepage, and resides indefinitely on the FTC's news pages. News releases are also distributed via email to relevant U.S. media outlets. To highlight major events and news, the FTC may use a banner across the top of its website, or a slider on the homepage slide show that links to embedded site content for more information. Furthermore, the FTC hosts a public calendar on its website to promote upcoming events including workshops, speeches, hearings, and Commission meetings.

Users can search FTC.gov with a series of topic tags, which are hyperlinked throughout the website to make relevant content easily accessible. The Commission is in the process of making further improvements to the search functionality of the website.

To supplement news releases, FTC staff uses social media to promote upcoming events and engage the public in an open and transparent manner. All official social media accounts are approved and monitored by the Office of Public Affairs. Commission staff actively blog for a variety of audiences to provide simple, plain language information across multiple topics including general consumer protection, competition, technology, computer security, business education, military consumer protection, scam alerts, National Consumer Protection Day, and analysis of Consumer Sentinel complaint data.

Users can subscribe to FTC press releases, blogs, and newsletters via email. This is a service provided at no cost to users. For blogs, users can also subscribe to free RSS feeds.

The FTC also uses Twitter, Facebook, and other social networking sites to share FTC news and resources, promote upcoming events, and more. The Commission maintains official accounts on Twitter in English and Spanish, and each of the current Commissioners maintains their own individual Twitter account. When the FTC hosts an interactive Twitter chat or live-tweets a workshop, the Commission may publish a press release online, post the upcoming event to its Events Calendar, and/or share the information via email and other official social media channels. When the Commission participates in or hosts interactive events, staff create a chat or workshop