

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
2016 Open Government Plan  
September 15, 2016

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) presents its 2016 Open Government Plan pursuant to the July 14, 2016, memorandum (2016 Open Plan Guidance) from Tony Scott, U.S. Chief Information Officer. The FTC's Plan furthers the actions it took relating to the issuance of the Office of Management and Budget's 2009 Open Government Directive, incorporate the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration set forth in the President's January 21, 2009 Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government. The FTC's Open Government page may be found at [www.ftc.gov/open](http://www.ftc.gov/open).

We solicit your input and feedback as we work to improve our transparency, participation and collaboration with this Plan. Please send any comments or suggestions to [opengov@ftc.gov](mailto:opengov@ftc.gov).

The FTC created its 2016 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.

## I. Introduction

The FTC is committed to continuing to improve its transparency and integrate a presumption of openness into our mission. The FTC posts consumer information, business guidance, economic reports, analysis, press releases, information about workshops, events, speeches, FOIA responses; and a wide range of other information. The FTC also places a large volume of records relating to both its enforcement and policy mandates on its public website [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov). This includes, among other things, public versions of adjudicative decisions and pleadings and rulemaking materials.

## II. Overview of Achievements from 2014 Open Government Plan

### Improved Web Outreach

The FTC has long taken steps to improve its web communications and outreach based on research, analysis, usability testing, and stakeholder input. Our goal is to enable site visitors to complete their tasks and find information easily. Since its last Open Government Plan in 2014, the FTC has made the following improvements:

- x Redesigned [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) home page (English and Spanish) to focus on customer-driven "top tasks," enabling customers to find their top task in one click;
- x Modified site search to push the most relevant result ("best bet") to the top of the search results page, helping customers find the best result more quickly
- x Integrated Commissioners' daily schedules into the agency's public event calendar on the web;
- x Created an alphabetical set of Commission Report pages;
- x Removed the word limit for, and added summaries to, the Advocacy File page.

x Improved [econsumer.gov](https://econsumer.gov)

identified for posting, those datasets are also loaded onto our website. In addition to meeting with key stakeholders as to what data they would like to see posted on the FTC website, the FTC also has an [email address](#) for the public to provide us with comments and suggestions. These practices help the FTC build on our past successes to ensure greater openness and transparency in the coming years.

The FTC's [datasets](#) are populated with information from Bureau of Competition and Bureau of Consumer Protection matters. These datasets consist of merger enforcement actions, merger enforcement actions, and civil penalties activities beginning in fiscal year 1996. Other posted datasets include information on merger filings received on a monthly basis under the [Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvement Act](#), fiscal year data on second requests issued as well as data on requests for early terminations and the outcome of those requests.

In addition, the FTC maintains the Consumer Sentinel Network. This secure online database holding millions of consumer complaints of alleged illegal business conduct concerning issues such as identity theft, Do-Not-Call Registry violations; and financial, telemarketing, business opportunity and health care scams. Consumer Sentinel Network [datasets](#) ranging from 2008 to 2015, are available to the public in a spreadsheet format. Other datasets include the [Do-Not-Call Registry](#) and product service codes for the Consumer Sentinel Network.

## B. Proactive Disclosures

The Federal Trade Commission's mission strives to prevent business practices that are anticompetitive, deceptive or unfair to consumers; to enhance the choices of informed consumers and the understanding of the competitive process; and to accomplish this mission without unduly burdening legitimate business activity. The Agency's [Public Affairs Office](#) keeps the public informed of FTC activities and the Agency's educational resources through press releases, press conferences, new media outlets, and periodic town halls.

The Commission has brought numerous adjudicative (Part 3) proceedings against companies in an effort to increase the public's awareness of the Commission's litigation activities as required by Federal law. The Commission posts [adjudicative records](#) to its public website. In addition, the FTC places a large volume of records relating to both its enforcement and policy mandates on its public website, including as noted above all adjudicative decisions as well as rulemaking materials and comments, workshop information, speeches, and a wide range of other documents.

The FTC has made and continues to make agency records available for public inspection by posting certain additional FTC records in its online [FOIA reading room](#). Records in the FTC reading room include, among other items, recent FTC policy statements, [Recently Requested FOIA records](#), [Hot Topics](#), FOIA annual report, Chief FOIA Officer report, FTC's [FOIA Handbook](#), Trak Your FOIA Request, and FTC Rules as noted earlier.

## C. Upcoming Public Involvement

As part of its mission, the FTC regularly holds public events designed to bring together broad expertise to enhance public understanding of key issues. For example, in 2016, the Federal Trade



- x includes, within the FTC's onboarding orientation materials information about PPP, the Merit System Principles, and the rights of employees under Whistleblower Protection Act;
- x mandates No Fear Act Training for all employees
- x provides, on a three year cycle, our supervisors and managers interactive training 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

In 2016, the FTC formed a new Digital Communications team's Office of Public Affairs (OPA). This team will collaborate with internal stakeholders and lead the development of a Digital Communications Strategy and an agency-wide focus on the customer experience and customer top tasks. This effort encompasses public-facing web properties, and includes developing a roadmap for continual assessment of web property performance and customer satisfaction to make iterative improvements, create efficiencies, and share information about digital communications best practices across the agency.

The FTC will solicit input from critical stakeholders and customers, (consumers, legal practitioners, legislative staff, media, academia) in a structured fashion to gather insights about how the agency can improve its digital communications, outreach and the customer experience. The agency anticipates that in 2017 it will conduct the first major usability study of its website since it was redesigned in 2013 to identify issues, gaps, and opportunities for improvement.

Over the next two years, the agency will explore creating APIs to enable the sharing of critical data and content such as early terminations (part of the HSR merger review process).

The agency has begun work to make the following stream improvements to its web communications:

- x Assess the performance of site search and take steps to improve its effectiveness
- x Rebuild its Military Consumer website with more articles, links to resources, and a revised site navigation focused on life events.
- x Rebuild its Registered Identification Number (RN) Database website containing RNs which companies use for labeling products under the Textile, Wool, and /or Fur Acts – for textile producers to make the site more user and mobile friendly.

The link to the agency's digital strategy is [www.ftc.gov/digitalstrategy](http://www.ftc.gov/digitalstrategy)

### D. Open Innovation Methods



## 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 Generation (FPDS) with the appropriate contract values. The system data is croi, [(S)-4(na)-6(PTd (

submitted electronically, providing the public a user-friendly way of participating in these proceedings. Most comments on FTC proceedings submit comments through web-based forms maintained by a Commission vendor, rather than through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). The link to the comment form is included in the agency's Federal Register notices, on all the [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) postings of those notices, and on the agency's website. The agency posts





documents generated in its public proceedings. In particular, the Commission posted public documents it has authorized or approved since 1996, when the Commission became fully operational on its website.

contains several substantive and procedural amendments to the FOIA as well as new reporting requirements for agencies. The FTC is currently updating its FOIA regulations to be consistent with the amendments. Once the regulations have been updated, they will be posted in the FTC's online FOIA Reading Room. In the meantime, the FTC has already updated its FOIA response

FOIA program and responding to FOIA requests, please review the FTC's FOIA page as well as the most recent [FOIA Annual Report](#) and [Chief FOIA Officer Report](#)

#### K. Congressional Requests

The FTC serves as a resource for Congress on ~~petition~~ and consumer protection policy, and each year responds to as many as 1,000 letters from Members of Congress. Information about the Office of Congressional Relations can be found [here](#). FTC Commissioners and staff are often asked to [testify before congressional panels](#). The FTC also works with Congressional staff to provide constituents with the FTC's free [consumer publications](#)

#### L. Declassification

Not applicable. The FTC does not maintain any classification or declassification program for its information.

#### M. Participation, Collaboration, and Outreach.

The FTC collaborates with other agencies and citizens to help solve national problems. We strive to engage and reach out to the public through various methods including, among others, groups, twitter chats, town hall style events, and education. Some of this activity can be seen in our Education Arm, the FTC's Consumer Response Center: [#FTCResponseCenter](#); our Competition Policy Guidance: [#FTCCompetitionPolicy](#); and the Bureau of Competition

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