

United States of America
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20580

Prepared Remarks of Commissioner Rebecca K. Slaughter
Retina-X Studios, LLC Press Call
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Good afternoon. I am pleased to join this conference, because the case we are discussing represents an important milestone in the FTC's efforts to protect consumers. It is our first case against "stalkerware," apps that allow surreptitious monitoring of consumers. These apps are not

But most critically, Retina-X almost certainly collected information about adults who had not consented to that collection and did not even know it was occurring, which brings me to our final message, for the public: stalking apps can pose serious dangers to consumers. It only takes an abuser a few minutes to install a stalking app on a victim's phone, and from an online dashboard, watch not only almost everything the victim does on the phone but also everywhere she goes in the world.

If you think someone might have installed a stalking app on your smartphone, we have put together resources for you at consumer.ftc.gov. We have a blogpost there that outlines steps you may take to check if your device has been compromised. For example, you can use a "Root checker" app to identify if your smartphone has been rooted or jailbroken, which might then signal that a stalking app has been installed on your phone. If your phone is rooted or jailbroken, or otherwise could be compromised, you might also consider whether to get a new smartphone with an account that the abuser does not have access to, or consider factory resetting your smartphone and reinstalling the manufacturer's operating system. An additional step could be to contact law enforcement and domestic violence advocates as resources to assist in identifying tech misuse and creating a safety plan. If you reach out to these resources, consider contacting them from a different device than the one that might have the stalking app.

I would also like to thank the National Network to End Domestic Violence for being such a comprehensive resource for domestic abuse survivors and an important partner to us at the Commission, as we strive to educate more consumers about the risks certain technologies can introduce to our daily lives, especially at the intersection of technology and intimate partner abuse. Now I will turn things over to Cindy Southworth and Erica Olsen of the NNEDV, who will share some examples of why products like those at the heart of today's settlement are so dangerous for victims of domestic violence and stalking, and provide more information and advice for consumers about resources that can help.