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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 23, 2012

We Can't Wait: Obama Administration Unveils Blueprint for a "Privacy Bill of

Rights” to Protect Consumers Online

Internet Advertising Networks Announces Commitment to “Do-Not-Track” Technology to Allow Consumers to Control Online Tracking

WASHINGTON, DC - The Obama Administration today unveiled a “Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights” as part of a comprehensive blueprint to improve consumers’ privacy protections and ensure that the Internet remains an engine for innovation and economic growth. The blueprint will guide efforts to give users more control over how their personal information is used on the Internet and to help businesses maintain consumer trust and grow in the rapidly changing digital environment. At the request of the White House, the Commerce Department will begin convening companies, privacy advocates and other stakeholders to develop and implement enforceable privacy policies based on the [Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights](#).

In addition, advertising networks announced that leading Internet companies and online advertising networks are committing to act on Do Not Track technology in most major web browsers to make it easier for users to control online tracking. Companies that represent the delivery of nearly 90 percent of online behavioral advertisements, including Google, Yahoo!, Microsoft, and AOL have agreed to comply when consumers choose to control online tracking. Companies that make this commitment will be subject to FTC enforcement.

“American consumers can’t wait any longer for clear rules of the road that ensure their personal information is safe online,” said **President Obama**. “As the Internet evolves, consumer trust is essential for the continued growth of the digital economy. That’s why an online privacy Bill of Rights is so important. For businesses to succeed online, consumers must feel secure. By following this blueprint, companies, consumer advocates and policymakers can help protect consumers and ensure the Internet remains a platform for innovation and economic growth.”

The advertising industry also committed not to release consumers’ browsing data to companies who might use it for purposes other than advertising, such as employers making hiring decisions or insurers determining coverage.

“It’s great to see that companies are stepping up to our challenge to protect privacy so consumers have greater choice and control over how they are tracked online. More needs to be done, but the work they have done so far is very encouraging,” said **FTC Chairman Jon Leibowitz**.

A Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights

The Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights is outlined in a report released today by the White House *Consumer Data Privacy in a Networked World: A Framework for Protecting Privacy and Promoting Innovation in the Global Digital Economy*.

“Every day, millions of Americans shop, sell, bank, learn, talk and work online. At the turn of the century, online retail sales were around \$20 billion in the United States, now they’re nearing \$200 billion,” said **Secretary Bryson**. “The Internet has become an engine of innovation, business growth, and job creation, so we need a strong foundation of clear protections for consumers, and a set of basic principles to help businesses guide their privacy and policy decisions. This privacy blueprint will do just that.”

The Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights provides a baseline of clear protections for consumers and greater certainty for businesses. The rights are:

Individual Control: Consumers have a right to exercise control over what personal data organizations collect from them and how they use it.

- **Transparency:** Consumers have a right to easily understandable information about privacy and security practices.
- **Respect for Context:** Consumers have a right to expect that organizations will collect, use, and disclose personal data in ways that are consistent with the context in which consumers provide the data.
- **Security:** Consumers have a right to secure and responsible handling of personal data.
- **Access and Accuracy:** Consumers have a right to access and correct personal data in usable formats, in a manner that is appropriate to the sensitivity of the data and the risk of adverse consequences to consumers if the data are inaccurate.
- **Focused Collection:** Consumers have a right to reasonable limits on the personal data that companies collect and retain.
- **Accountability:** Consumers have a right to have personal data handled by companies with appropriate measures in place to assure they adhere to the Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights.

The Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights is one of four key elements of the report, which also includes a stakeholder-driven process to specify how these rights apply in particular business contexts; strong enforcement by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC); and greater interoperability between the United States’ privacy framework and those of our international partners.

In the coming weeks, the Commerce Department’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration will convene stakeholders – including companies, privacy and consumer advocates, technical experts, international partners, and academics – to

establish specific practices or codes of conduct that implement the general principles in the Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights.

The Administration also will work with Congress to develop legislation based on these rights to promote trust in the digital economy and extend baseline privacy protections to commercial sectors that existing federal privacy laws do not cover.

Today's report results from a comprehensive review of the intersection of privacy policy and innovation in the Internet economy. The Commerce Department's Internet Policy Task Force launched the review in 2010, seeking public comment on an initial set of issues and later on a set of policy recommendations.



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