

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 posts to its primary website, FTC.gov and other FTC web properties: [consumer information](#); [business guidance](#); [statistical data about consumer complaints regarding fraud, identity theft, unwanted calls, and other consumer protection issues](#); [economic](#); [press releases, speeches, and commission statements](#); information about [workshops and workshops and analysis](#); [press releases](#); information about [workshops](#), ; and [speeches](#) [FOIA responses](#); public comments; and a wide range of other mission-related information. The FTC also places a large volume of records relating to both its [enforcement](#) and [policy](#) mandates. This includes, among other things, public versions of case documents, [adjudicative decisions](#) and [pleadings](#), and [rulemaking](#) materials.

II. Overview of Achievements from 2016 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. The FTC's goal is to enable site visitors to complete their tasks and find information easily. Since the FTC published its last Open Government Plan in 2016, the FTC has made the following improvements:

- Improved FTC.gov user experience by integrating a new [site search](#) – powered by GSA's search.gov – that improves the relevancy of results. Resulted in dramatic reduction in user complaints.
- Streamlined citizen service by increasing the use of web forms. Examples include form for digital submission of conference papers, the submission of evidence to the FTC by scam victims, and RSVP for FTC events.
- Improved public visibility into FTC enforcement actions by adding [Process Enforcement documents](#) to inform public and media about actions the FTC has taken to enforce decisions/actions.
- Provided comprehensive, public record of the 14 public [Hearings on Competition and Consumer Protection in the 21st Century](#), including audio, video, transcripts, presentations and 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](#).

- 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 [Media Resources](#) pages on FTC.gov
- Improved usability of [public events calendar](#) to make it easier for public to find FTC events.

As part of the FTC's web outreach we have also created [IdentityTheft.gov](#) (and its Spanish counterpart [RoboDeIdentidad.gov](#)). This was the FTC's answer to an executive order issued by President Obama in October 2014 directing federal agencies to create a consolidated site with essential information for consumers, including information about identity theft. The FTC launched the initial version of IdentityTheft.gov in May 2015, and in 2016 we launched [significant enhancements](#) to both Identity Theft sites, creating an easy-to-use online resource to help victims of identity theft quickly report the crime, stop additional fraudulent activity, and begin the recovery process. In 2017, the IdentityTheft.gov Development Team was a finalist in the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals under the Safety and Law Enforcement category.

In 2018, the FTC collaborated with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to help victims of tax-related identity theft file the IRS Form 14039 electronically via IdentityTheft.gov. The process streamlines the consumer's recovery from tax identity theft and ensures that victim information gets to the IRS securely.

III. New and Expanded Initiatives

A. Open Data

Achievements in making data publicly available since the 2016 Open Government Plan include

- Broadened access to [Early Termination notices](#), daily announcements related to the [Premerger Notification Program](#), by creating [the agency's first API endpoint](#) for the data and enabling the public to subscribe to receive announcements via email.
- Increased public access to FTC data [by increasing number of datasets on data.gov to 91](#) as of December 2019.
- Promoted data-driven visualizations and dashboards on Tableau Public, which share consumer complaint data at the national and state levels, via an [Explore Data page on FTC.gov](#)
- Created public access on FTC.gov to daily [Do Not Call \(DNC\) Reported Calls Data](#) a list of phone numbers and robocall complaints reported to the FTC.

The FTC works to provide easy public access to Commission datasets. Individuals across the FTC's Bureaus and Offices meet regularly to identify whether new datasets that have been created should be posted, or whether an existing dataset not previously identified for posting should be

posted. The FTC updates existing database information on a quarterly basis, and if new datasets are identified for posting, those datasets are then loaded onto the Commission’s website. In addition to meeting with key stakeholders to understand what data they would like to see posted on the FTC website, the FTC also has an [email](#) address that allows the public to provide us with comments and suggestions. These practices help the FTC build on its 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 non-merger enforcement actions, merger enforcement actions, and civil penalties actions beginning in fiscal year 1996. Other posted datasets include information on merger filings received on a monthly basis under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements 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—a secure online database holding millions of consumer complaints of alleged illegal business conduct concerning issues such as fraud, identity theft, Do Not Call (DNC) Registry violations, deceptive financial practices, and other types of consumer protection problems. Consumer Sentinel Network [datasets](#) from 2008 to 2019 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.

In 2018, the FTC began posting statistical data about fraud, identity theft, unwanted calls, and other consumer reports to the Consumer Sentinel Network on interactive and dynamic dashboards [hosted on a Tableau Public site](#). For example, members of the media, academics, researchers, and everyday consumers can explore maps to see the concerns that consumers most commonly reported in their state or metro area. They can identify the top reported consumer problems, and can look at trends over time to see seasonal and yearly changes. They can explore how different age groups report fraud and fraud losses, and can learn fast facts about fraud, such as the most common ways people reported paying for a fraud.

In 2017, the FTC began automatically providing DNC call data to the public on a daily basis. The data is used by the call-blocking industry to improve applications that help consumers filter and block unwanted calls. In addition, in 2017 the FTC began releasing an Annual Report on Refunds to Consumers, which provides data and other information about FTC law enforcement cases that resulted in refunds to consumers.

B. Proactive Disclosures

The Federal Trade Commission’s mission is to prevent business practices that are anticompetitive, deceptive, or unfair to consumers; to enhance the choices of informed consumers and their understanding of the competitive process; and to accomplish this mission without unduly burdening legitimate business activity. The Commission’s [Office of Public Affairs](#) keeps the public informed of FTC activities and the Commission’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, and as required by Federal law, the Commission posts its [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 Commission records available for public inspection by posting certain additional FTC records in its online [FOIA reading room](#). Records in this FTC reading room include, among other items, recent FTC policy statements, [Frequently Requested FOIA records](#), [Hot Topics](#), the FOIA annual report, the Chief FOIA Officer report, the FTC's [FOIA Handbook](#), Track 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 2020, the FTC will host its fifth annual [PrivacyCon 2020](#). For PrivacyCon 2020 the FTC is seeking research presentations on any topics related to consumer privacy and security, with a particular on the privacy of health data collected, stored, and transmitted by mobile applications (“apps”). The call for presentations seeks empirical research responding to several questions, including:

- What are the risks to consumer data, particularly data held by health apps, and how does the risk vary by product and data type?
- Which products are transmitting user data to third parties, who are the recipients, what are the data, and what are the apparent purposes for these transmissions?
- Has empirical work assessed consumer perception of the privacy and security of products that handle sensitive information? What factors affect that perception (e.g., endorsement by a credible organization, popularity, representations in the privacy policy, claims in a user interface, paid versus non-paid version)? Are consumer perceptions of the privacy and security of products accurate? How do we know?
- What are the tradeoffs between product functionality (including the ability to combine data from various devices) and increased security or increased privacy protections?
- Are there unique attributes or characteristics of apps that collect, store, or transmit health data that merit special attention or focus?

PrivacyCon is free and open to the public. It will be held in Washington, DC and will have a live webcast. The FTC invites comment from the public on this and other events.

IV. Ongoing Initiatives

A. Privacy

The FTC continues to comply with existing OMB guidance and other Federal requirements for providing the public with notice and information about its privacy program and privacy compliance documentation. The FTC provides the public with access to information regarding its privacy program in a number of ways. First, the FTC's privacy policy page includes detailed information about the information the Commission collects and how it handles and shares that information. In addition, the FTC provides links to publicly available documents pertaining to privacy, including Privacy Act systems of records notices (SORNs), privacy impact assessments (PIAs), required privacy compliance reports, and privacy regulations. The FTC also provides instructions to members of the public for requesting access to and amendment of Privacy Act records. In 2016, the FTC updated its privacy policy page to provide additional information and links to privacy-related guidance, including more information about making a request under the Privacy Act and a direct link to the request form. The FTC also provides contact information for the Senior Agency Official for Privacy (SAOP) to answer questions from members of the public about the FTC's information

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 public. The purpose of these groups is to foster collaboration and communication to improve outreach, the customer experience, the customers' success in performing tasks on web properties, and best practices.

The FTC also launched and completed the discovery phase of its Digital Strategy project regarding its informational websites – FTC.gov and consumer education websites – in preparation for migration from Drupal 7 to Drupal 8 sometime in the next two years. The discovery phase involved analysis of the sites' content, technical architecture, and workflow. More important, it included intensive data collection, analysis, and listening sessions with stakeholders, including the public, via surveys and focus groups. This data collection and analysis is the foundation for the development of a roadmap to ensure the sites are oriented to customer needs and tasks as they are designed and built in Drupal 8.

While this effort launched before the passage of the 21st Century IDEA, it has now become part of the agency's larger planning regarding meeting the requirements of the act, which

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—just 6 months after being named one of the winners. To date, NomoRobo reports blocking over 118,305,772 calls and is currently rolling out a mobile platform.

The following year at [DEF CON 22](#), the FTC launched its second challenge—Zapping Rachel—that called upon information security experts to help create a robust robocall honeypot. A robocall honeypot is an information system designed to attract robocallers and help investigators and academics understand and combat illegal calls. The contest consisted of three separate phases in which participants were challenged to (1) build a robocall honeypot; (2) attack and find honeypot vulnerabilities; and (3) analyze honeypot data. Sixty teams and individuals signed up for one or more phases, and FTC staff obtained new insights that improved current robocall honeypot designs and connected new partners and stakeholders. Open-source solutions from the first and third phases were made available to the public.

As part of the National Day of Civic Hacking on June 6, 2015, the FTC sponsored its third challenge, [DectectaRobo](#), in which it called upon the public to analyze call data to create algorithms that could predict which calls were likely robocalls. Nineteen teams from across the U.S. participated.

Later in 2015, the FTC returned to [DEF CON 23](#) to challenge information security experts to create tools people could use to block and forward robocalls automatically to a honeypot—the Robocalls: Humanity Strikes Back challenge. DEF CON contestants built and submitted robocall solutions to the judges. Finalists then competed to “seed” their solutions and collect the highest number of

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 U.S.C. 6101(3)), which also expressly excludes “conventional public information services” provided by an agency). Nonetheless, the FTC participates in the CFDA program and is listed in the CFDA website catalogue as providing “Advisory Services and Counseling” and “Investigation

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 transcript for historical reference. This also applies for chats on other official Commission sites such as Facebook or reddit.

When feasible, the FTC will live-webcast press conferences and workshops from its offices in Washington, D.C. Archives and transcripts of webcasts are posted to [FTC.gov/videos](#) for at least three years. The FTC provides webcast links to users via press releases, email notices, and/or via official FTC social media channels. During live events, the FTC may take questions from the public via telephone conference. In addition to enhancing the overall look and feel of the FTC website, staff continue to evaluate content throughout the site on a rolling basis to ensure that it is fresh and current for maximum transparency.

2. Public Documents

The Commission provides members of the public with extensive information regarding all the public actions it takes or proposes to take, and all the public proceedings and other significant activities it conducts. The FTC's website at [www.ftc.gov](#) provides public access to more than 100,000 Commission documents, including:

- [Statutes Enforced or Administered by the Commission](#);
- [Rules and Guides](#);
- [Commission and Commission Staff Speeches](#);
- [Commission and Commissioner Public Statements and Letters](#);
- all the public documents arising from Commission federal court and administrative [Cases and Proceedings](#);
- [Press Releases](#);
- [Federal Register Notices](#);
- [Amicus Briefs](#);
- [Advocacy Filings](#);
- [Process Enforcement](#);
- [FTC Annual Reports](#);
- other [Commission and Staff Reports](#);
- [International and Interagency Cooperation Agreements](#);
- [Congressional Testimony](#);
- [Policy Statements](#);
- [Advisory Opinions](#); and
- [The Commission Decision Volumes](#), which contain all the administrative documents issued by the Commission since 1915.

Finally, the [Commission Actions](#) page provides chronological access to all of the above Commission documents.

The Commission provides through its website—consistent with Section 207 of the E-Government Act of 2002, 44 U.S.C. § 3501 Note—public access to virtually all public documents generated in its public proceedings. In particular, when the Commission website first became fully operational, the Commission posted all public documents it had authorized or approved since 1996, on www.ftc.gov. The Commission also posts all the information required by Section 206(b) of the E-Government Act and subsections (a)(1) and (2) of the Freedom of Information Act, including the [Commission Rules of Organization, Procedure, and Practice](#), [Commission and Commissioner Opinions and Final Orders in Adjudicative Proceedings](#) (as well as all other public orders issued and filings effected in adjudicative proceedings), and [Commission Policy Statements](#). Moreover, as prescribed by Section 206(c) of the E-Government Act, the Commission accepts electronic submissions—through the creation and maintenance of either comment filing forms or email boxes—whenever it solicits public comment in rulemaking proceedings, administrative consent agreement proceedings, and other public proceedings such as workshops. Furthermore, as prescribed by Section 206(d) of the E-Government Act, the Commission posts all the rulemakings and other Notices it publishes in the Federal Register on its [Federal Register Notices](#) page, as noted above, and posts the public comments filed in such proceedings on its [Public Comments](#) page. In addition, as noted above, the Commission continues to participate in the ongoing initiative to establish a centralized Federal regulatory docket at www.regulations.gov.¹

I. Records & Information Management

The FTC’s Records and Information Management (RIM) program is responsible for implementing the requirements of the Federal Records Act and regulations and requirements from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), OMB, and General Services Administration (GSA).

The RIM program provides policy, training, and guidance to Commission personnel on the creation, maintenance, and disposition of FTC federal records and non-records created and received in the course of Commission business. The program also manages the Commission’s NARA-approved comprehensive disposition schedule and implements requirements for federal Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI). Annual training, required for all staff and all contractors with network access, is conducted in connection with the FTC’s “Privacy Week” and focuses on document management, protection of confidential information, federal records management, and privacy and data security.

The FTC is working to meet the requirements of the June 28, 2019 OMB Memorandum M-19-21, Transition to Electronic Records, which requires that agencies transition to electronic recordkeeping to the fullest extent possible. This is an important part of meeting open government goals.

J. FOIA

On June 22, 2016, Senate Bill 337, the [FOIA Improvement Act of 2016](#), was submitted to President Obama and on June 30, 2016, the President signed it, making it effective immediately. The Act 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

¹ The Commission’s Web Publication Schedule, as required by Section 207 of the E-Government Act, is set forth at <https://www.ftc.gov/site-information/website-policy/web-publication-schedule>.

FOIA Reading Room. In the meantime, the FTC has already updated its FOIA response letters to include information about how FOIA requesters can seek assistance from NARA's Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), the availability of dispute resolution services through the FTC's FOIA Public Liaison, and the 90-day period for requesters to appeal an adverse FOIA decision.

Many of the FTC's records are available for public inspection on the FTC [FOIA reading room](#) website. The FTC reorganized its FOIA reading room to categorize FOIA requests by topic and subject matter. Now, topics are listed in alphabetical order and contain FOIA request numbers along with the size and type of file for downloading. Further, all posted FOIA requests are reviewed to ensure each has the request description, responsive documents, and signed final letter. This improved organization helps requesters quickly identify information by topic and, if desired, to specifically request further information using the listed FOIA number. The topics and FOIA requests also provide the dates for each request, response, and disclosure, which enables requesters to ask for information after the date of the most recent response. Records in the FOIA reading room include, among other items, recent FTC policy statements, [Frequently Requested](#) FOIA records, [Hot Topics](#), the FOIA annual report, the Chief FOIA Officer report, the FTC's [FOIA Handbook](#), and FTC Rules.

The FTC also posts [FOIA logs](#) that enable requesters (and the public) to track requests and to determine whether they are still pending or have been closed. FOIA logs contain the name of the requester (excluding private individuals), the FOIA request number, the type of organization making the request, and a description of the request. Recently, the webpage was updated to include not only open requests received within the past two weeks, but also all pending requests, regardless of the time of receipt. Requests closed within the past two weeks appear on the website as well.

The FTC strives to remain fully compliant with FOIA. In fiscal year 2019, the FTC received 1466 FOIA requests and processed the vast majority of requests within the statutory period, and consistently has had less than 10 overdue requests at the close of the fiscal year. For a more in-depth description of the Commission's 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 competition 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 website includes links to any such testimony. 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 de-classification program for its information.

The Commission's goal is always to use its authority and expertise to protect consumers and competition as effectively as possible, to avoid duplication, and to promote consistency across the government.