

FTC Issues Mobile Privacy Guidelines

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The FTC has issued a set of [guidelines](#) [1] for mobile application developers. While not legally binding, the new rules were released on the same days as regulators announced a settlement with social network provider Path.

The FTC report, recommends ways that developers and mobile service providers can better inform consumers about their data practices. The report addresses specific players, suggesting best practices for mobile platforms, application developers, advertising networks and analytics companies, and app developer trade associations.

Most of the recommendations involve making sure that consumers understand what data they collect and how the data is used.

“The mobile world is expanding and innovating at breathtaking speed, allowing consumers to do things that would have been hard to imagine only a few years ago,” said FTC Chairman Jon Leibowitz, in a statement. “These best practices will help to safeguard consumer privacy and build trust in the mobile marketplace, ensuring that the market can continue to thrive.”

The report cites recent data showing that consumers increasingly are concerned about their privacy on mobile devices. For example, 57 percent of all app users have either uninstalled an app over concerns about having to share their personal information, or declined to install an app in the first place for similar reasons. Less than one-third of Americans feel they are in control of their personal information on their mobile devices.

The report comes as the FTC announced it had reached a settlement with social network Path's admission of gathering and storing user's contact information. The FTC has imposed an \$800,000 fine on Path, as well as committing the service to a third-party privacy audits.

“This settlement with Path shows that no matter what new technologies emerge, the agency will continue to safeguard the privacy of Americans,” Leibowitz wrote.

The new guidelines seem to be a first step towards dealing with consumer privacy. The National Telecommunications and Information Agency, within the U.S. Department of Commerce, is working with other stakeholders to develop a code of

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conduct on mobile application transparency.

The FTC said that to the "extent that strong privacy codes are developed, the FTC will view adherence to such codes favorably in connection with its law enforcement work."

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<http://www.wirelessweek.com/news/2013/02/ftc-issues-mobile-privacy-guidelines>

Links:

[1] <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2013/02/mobileprivacy.shtm>