

Digital Privacy

Internet users should be certain that sharing images, exchanging messages, visiting websites, engaging in commerce, and sending sensitive data are the types of acts the entire internet ecosystem is obligated to respect and protect.

USTelecom believes digital privacy is sacred and consumers should be able to confidently use the internet while maintaining their privacy. USTelecom is doing its part to shore up digital trust and give Americans the confidence that no matter what platform, device or network they choose, guardrails will be in place to protect their digital privacy and support the growing and interdependent internet ecosystem.

National Privacy Framework

At this critical point in our growing reliance on communications technology, we need a comprehensive, unified privacy blueprint that puts consumers first, applies uniformly to all companies that collect, use, or share a consumer's online personal data, and preempts individual state laws.

Ultimately, a national framework for digital privacy is going to require Congressional intervention. Unless and until Congress formulates federal legislation on privacy, the European Union (EU) and individual states will keep stepping in with well-meaning, but counterproductive, privacy rules that create consumer confusion, uncertainty for internet companies, and turns the EU or statehouses into de facto regulators of digital privacy in the U.S.

USTelecom's commitment to digital privacy includes:

- **TRANSPARENCY** ► USTelecom supports a requirement that companies give users clear and comprehensible information about the categories of data collected, how consumer data is used, and the types of third parties with whom data may be shared.
- **RESPECT FOR CONSUMER CHOICE** ► USTelecom agrees that companies should give consumers easy to understand privacy choices based on the sensitivity of the data, how the data is being used or shared, and the purpose of that use. Companies should obtain consent when collecting sensitive personal information about children, health, finances and Social Security numbers.
- **PROTECT PERSONAL INFORMATION** ► USTelecom supports requiring companies to take reasonable steps to protect consumer data and the continued use of anonymization techniques to minimize the risk associated with the collection, use, storage and sharing of a consumer's personal data. Notification of breaches of consumer data stored or maintained by companies should be triggered by a determination that a breach has occurred that poses a reasonable risk of consumer financial harm.
- **DATA INNOVATION** ► USTelecom supports affirmatively allowing innovative uses of data, while also encouraging the development of privacy-enhancing technologies and effective administrative safeguards.
- **COLLABORATIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS** ► USTelecom encourages voluntary privacy programs and standards be developed through public-private collaboration that could serve as a safe harbor in legislation while enabling companies to adapt to rapidly changing technology and market developments.

USTelecom recommends the FTC remain the cop on the beat with additional resources and flexibility to bring enforcement actions when privacy and data security violations occur.