



Federal Trade Commission Protecting America's Consumers

For Release: 11/14/2011

FTC Welcomes a New Privacy System for the Movement of Consumer Data Between the United States and Other Economies in the Asia-Pacific Region

The Federal Trade Commission welcomed the approval by the forum on Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) of a new initiative to harmonize cross-border data privacy protection among members of APEC. The initiative is designed to enhance the protection of consumer data that moves between the United States and other APEC members, at a time when more consumer information is moving across national borders.

On November 13, 2011, President Obama and representatives from the other APEC economies endorsed the APEC Cross-Border Privacy Rules at a meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii. The APEC privacy system is a self-regulatory code of conduct designed to create more consistent privacy protections for consumers when their data moves between countries with different privacy regimes in the APEC region. The FTC and the Department of Commerce helped develop the APEC privacy rules.

FTC Commissioner Edith Ramirez welcomed the initiative on behalf of the agency, noting that the global flow of data raises significant consumer protection issues. Ramirez has been active in the FTC effort within APEC since she joined the agency in 2010.

"With personal information now moving around the world in the blink of an eye, we need pragmatic ways to bridge the gaps between different legal systems and privacy regimes. The APEC privacy rules have the potential to significantly benefit companies, consumers, and privacy regulators and move us closer to global interoperability of privacy regimes," Ramirez said.

Companies that wish to participate in the APEC privacy system will undergo a review and certification process by third parties that will examine corporate privacy policies and practices and enforce the new privacy rules. In addition, the FTC and privacy authorities in the APEC region that choose to participate in the program will serve as backstop enforcers of the APEC privacy rules.

The FTC, the Department of Commerce, U.S. corporations, and privacy advocacy organizations worked together with their counterparts in other APEC economies to formulate the APEC cross-border privacy rules. APEC member economies expect to launch the new privacy system next year.

In addition to the United States, the 21 APEC members include Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The Federal Trade Commission works for consumers to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices and to provide information to help spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint in English or Spanish, visit the FTC's online [Complaint Assistant](#) or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357). The FTC enters complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to more than 2,000 civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad. The FTC's website provides free information on a variety of [consumer topics](#). Like the FTC on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

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