

Internet Privacy: Existing Policies and Consumer Protections

Why did Congress recently act on privacy?

Congress rolled back the Federal Communications Commission's rules because those rules did little to protect consumer privacy and only created confusion and a false sense of security for consumers. The rules fragmented the Federal Trade Commission's unified approach to privacy protection that's been working for 20 years.

Did the vote in Congress impact consumers' internet privacy?

Repeal of the FCC's broadband privacy rules does not harm consumers or change the status quo. Indeed, nothing for consumers has changed because repeal leaves in place the existing legal framework that has been in place for over two years since the FCC adopted the *Open Internet Order* and reclassified broadband Internet access service as a telecommunications service.

What about the FCC rules in the news?

The FCC rules had not taken effect yet. Those rules, had they been implemented, would have put requirements only on internet service providers that were inconsistent with the rules that apply to all other players on the internet who hold much more consumer information than the ISPs. Consumers want regulations that apply to their data consistently no matter what kind of company is holding that data. Consumer information should be protected based on the sensitivity of the information, not the entity collecting it.

Should states take legislative action?

Consumer privacy should be protected consistently across the internet. Policy to ensure robust protection of consumer privacy on the internet should be uniform across the nation and should be enforced by a single government agency. AT&T and every other major internet service provider has committed to additional **privacy principles**, which are consistent with the privacy framework developed by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) over the past twenty years. States continue to have the authority to enforce privacy and consumer protection without any need for legislation that could disrupt the Internet and have enormous unintended consequences.

How does AT&T protect privacy?

AT&T's **privacy protections** are the same today as they were five months ago when the FCC rules were adopted. The Congressional action had zero effect on the privacy protections AT&T afforded to consumers.

Our privacy commitments are always available on our website:

http://about.att.com/sites/privacy_policy

- We safeguard our customers' data, using encryption and other security techniques to protect it.
- We do not sell your individual web browsing history.
- Medical, tax and financial data is, and has always been, private.
- Our Privacy Policy explains what information we collect, how we use it, and with whom we share it. The Policy is written in plain language and is easily accessible on our website.