

Robocalls Challenge Facebook Chat Transcript

The following is a transcript of the FTC's official Q and A with Kati Daffan answering questions from the public about the FTC's Robocall Challenge on October 25, 2012. The chat was scheduled from 2:00pm-3:00pm ET. We've listed the comments directed to the FTC and answers in order for ease of reading. This information, without names redacted & in the actual order posts came in, remains public on the [FTC's Facebook page](#).

Staff Opening Comment: Hi all, Kati Daffan here! I'm an FTC staff attorney helping to manage the FTC Robocall Challenge. Please post your questions about our first public challenge in this comment thread. We're here until 3pm ET live!

Comment 1: Do solutions have to work 100% of the time or is 98% satisfactory?

Staff Response: We are looking for the best solution possible. Judges' criteria are: Does it work? 50 percent Is it easy to use? 25 percent Can it be rolled out? 25 percent Please see criteria details page for more information: <http://robocall.challenge.gov/details/criteria>.

Comment 2: I see all your graphics point to VOIP being involved in the robocall process. Can we assume that any call not coming from VOIP is safe?

Staff Response: Unfortunately, no. The telephone network is a complicated tangle of VoIP and non-VoIP calls.

Comment 3: Would a solution running on desktops, notebooks, tablets, smartphones on custom devices be a nuisance or a case of choice?

Staff Response: We are not prejudging any solutions at this time. The judges are looking for a solution that works on as many end points as possible, including landlines.

Comment 4: Are there any legal robocalls that ask for user interaction?

Staff Response: Yes. For instance, confirming a doctor's appointment.

Comment 5: Can you trace a robocall as long as you stay on the line?

Staff Response: We have ways to trace robocalls, but discourage consumers from staying on the line because interacting with illegal robocallers may trigger more calls.

Comment 6: Ok, so some robocalls ask you to respond. Do those robocalls give you details about how to respond if you'd missed the call? For instance, if you didn't pick up the phone, would the doctor's office leave a voicemail telling you to call and confirm?

Staff Response: Robocalls vary widely, but in our experience legitimate callers will likely leave a message.

Comment 7: Would the FTC still encourage people to hangup if the consumer had a way to allow the FTC to trace the call? A robocall is only dangerous if the consumer doesn't know it's illegal, right?

Staff Response: The FTC recently announced a "robocall honeypot" to trace illegal robocalls. Consumers can help us by filing complaints at www.donotcall.gov. We don't advise consumers to stay on the line or engage with illegal robocallers as that may lead to more calls. More tips: www.ftc.gov/robocalls

Comment 8: In your experience, are illegal robocallers likely to leave a voicemail, and if so, is it beneficial at all for them to leave a voicemail?

Staff Response: We've seen both examples. Sometimes they leave a message trying to get a call back and sometimes they don't. But we can't speak to whether or not that benefits them.

Comment 9: Do legal robocallers have to supply caller id information or can they call blocked?

Staff Response: From the Truth in Caller ID Act of 2009: It is illegal to transmit misleading or inaccurate caller ID information with the intent to defraud, cause harm, or wrongfully obtain anything of value... <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/s30>

Comment 10: Can the number they leave on the voicemail be traced?

Staff Response: Sometimes it can be traced, and sometimes it is just one link in a very long train. For more information about call tracing, check out the FTC's robocall summit recording: <http://www.ftc.gov/video-library/index.php/ftc-events/robocalls:-all-the-rage-session-14/1923363584001?>

Comment 11: Who do you report to when callers violate the Truth in Caller ID Act of 2009 by transmitting bogus caller ID information?

Staff Response: Hi. You can file a complaint with the FCC at www.fcc.gov/complaints.

Comment 12: (participant comment directed at another participant) obviously you didn't see the detailed presentation made by the FTC last week. Pressing one just confirms you are a target and you will get more calls for doing it.

Staff Response: Here's the link for our Robocalls Summit webcasts: <http://www.ftc.gov/video-library/index.php/ftc-events/robocalls:-all-the-rage-session-14/1923363584001?>

Comment 13: I see the rules state you must be a company of 10..what if we are a company of 12? Can we still qualify?

Staff Response: Companies that employ more than 10 people can compete for the non-monetary prize, the Federal Trade Commission Technology Award:

<http://robocall.challenge.gov/details/faq>. Thanks!

Staff Closing Comment: Thanks all for participating in our chat! For more information about the challenge, please see <http://robocall.challenge.gov>. Thanks!