

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN TOM WHEELER
January 29, 2015**

Re: *Consumer Help Center.*

Let me tell you a story about Gettysburg, and, no, this isn't a Civil War history lesson.

Soon after I began working at the FCC, we planned a trip to visit the Commission's offices in Gettysburg, where some of our consumer complaint staff work. There, I saw something surprising.

When someone wrote a letter complaining about a practice that concerned them, the FCC filled a large envelope with 18 separate forms and mailed it to the consumer. Seventeen of those forms were totally irrelevant to the consumer's concern. In other words, a consumer complaining about a Do-Not-Call violation would receive a large package with forms applicable to everything from loud commercials to billing complaints. Then the consumer had to figure out what to do.

Our old, antiquated systems and processes were way behind the times, and had not kept pace with technology. In short, they needed a major overhaul.

Fortunately, the overwhelming majority of complaints were submitted online. Unfortunately, the online system also had many shortcomings. It put too much of a burden on consumers without taking advantage of many of the best customer relationship innovations the private sector has used for years.

One of my first actions as Chairman was appointing Diane Cornell to lead a Process Reform Initiative aimed at improving agency operations. Not surprisingly, the process reform team identified revamping our antiquated consumer complaint system and the related consumer service processes as a high priority.

As you heard from today's presentation, we're now in a different world.

Thanks to the incredible work of CGB, our IT team, and our process reform staff, we have brought our consumer complaints and information systems into the modern age. Just type in consumercomplaints.fcc.gov, and you can:

- Fill out a complaint with a few, much more targeted steps;
- Easily track the progress of the complaint;
- Easily access educational materials about your concern; and
- Get access to aggregated data on trends in consumer complaints.

Consumers can also go online any time to find downloadable, regularly-updated data on consumer complaint trends, analyzed in different ways. For example, complaint data can be sorted by state and technology.

Not only will consumers have a better experience, but also the system will enable us to track and provide more refined data on consumer complaint trends to better inform our policymaking and enforcement activities.

And, we're doing all this for less than it cost to run the old system!

This is the type of consumer service that Americans should expect from their government – it's easy to use, data-intensive, and cost-efficient. It is also fully accessible and responsive to Americans with disabilities.

And this is the type of IT model the FCC should be using moving forward: developed on a cloud-based, adaptable off-the-shelf platform focused on service delivery, rather than custom-built, high-maintenance, inflexible systems.

In a matter of months, we've taken a process that was outdated and broken and transformed it into a model for smart, accessible government. Thank you to everyone seated at this table and your partners across the agency who've done such wonderful work on this project. I'd especially like to thank Kris Monteith, Michael Carowitz, and their team in the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, as well as the creative IT team of Dusty Laun and James Brown, who all worked together with colleagues across the FCC to develop this new approach to serving consumers better.