

REMARKS OF FCC CHAIRMAN TOM WHEELER
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
ROBOCALL STRIKE FORCE LAUNCH EVENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.
AUGUST 19, 2016

Good morning, and thank you to all of you who have volunteered your time to spend the next 60 days buckled down on this very important issue.

It is significant that we have not just carriers, not just gateway providers, but also equipment and service providers here at this table, because this is a challenge that is going to require everybody's commitment.

Thank you to my colleagues on the Commission for joining us today.

I particularly want to thank Randall Stephenson for stepping up to lead this effort.

Americans are fed up.

Robocalls are a scourge. It's the number one complaint that we hear from consumers at the Commission. We receive more than 200,000 complaints a year.

Americans are right to be fed up with robocalls.

They are an invasion of privacy, and this scourge is rife with fraud and identity theft.

The problem is that the bad guys are beating the good guys with technology right now.

Voice over Internet Protocol calls from scammers in foreign countries rely on networks that aren't ready to deal with them.

The ability to spoof a legitimate phone number is a downside to a digital environment.

Let me reiterate that this isn't just a network problem. This is a community problem.

This has to do with those who build and operate networks, those who build and operate equipment, those who build and operate services. And that's why it's significant that you're all collectively here at this table.

The profit motive has driven bad guys to technological innovation that exploits consumers by exploiting networks

It's not as if good guys standing idly by. But we need more urgency.

Let's get to work on real solutions for robocalls.

You've got a group that's going to be working on the tools to allow third parties to develop call filtering options. That starts with open APIs, but let's give folks the opportunity to get creative and find solutions.

There must also be cross-carrier joint efforts to detect and stop the bad guys. Maybe it's a "Do Not Originate" list. Maybe you'll come up with something better.

But this is something that has to be multi-carrier, cross-carrier, and a community solution.

The Commission is committed to being an effective partner. Tell us what regulators need to do to help you achieve your goals.

We've already said that there's nothing in the rules that prohibits carriers from offering call-blocking, but if we need to do more, tell us where we need to do more.

Let me make one last observation.

As in any pressing challenge like this, perfect is the enemy of the good. The nature of software, as you all know, is start and continually improve. Let's have that philosophy here. Let's not sit around and wait for the ultimate solution. Let's start solving the issues immediately. And let's improve it tomorrow. And then make it even better the day after tomorrow.

Thanks again to all of you for your willingness to come together to attack the robocall epidemic. You set an aggressive schedule. We're grateful for that. We look forward to the results in 60 days.