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The Federal Trade Commission on Tuesday confirmed some of the worst fears about Internet-connected devices, saying the technology presented serious data security and privacy risks, and urged companies to make data protection a top priority.

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companies to develop new ways to communicate their data collection and handling practices — even if they market sensors that are too small to contain digital information displays for consumers. “We are still at a time when we can have an impact on how the Internet of Things evolves,” Ms. Ramirez said in the interview, referring to an array of connected devices. “These important privacy principles still have a place in today’s world.”

Although the report highlights the issues that the agency intends to monitor and underlines the best practices regulators hope companies will adopt, it does not carry the weight of enforceable regulations. The agency has urged Congress to enact a baseline federal consumer privacy law. But such legislation is unlikely to

While the agency noted the potential benefits for owners of smart devices like connected fitness bands, regulators also said the technology generated enormous amounts of personal data that could be misused or obtained by hackers. “Many of us are using these devices,” Edith Ramirez, the chairwoman of the F.T.C., said in a telephone interview. But, she said, “if consumers feel that their information isn’t being protected, they won’t have the confidence level to embrace them.”

[In a staff report](#), the agency urged companies to institute basic data security measures when they develop such devices and sensors, rather than as an afterthought. It also encouraged

pass with Congress controlled by Republicans. Still, data security and privacy experts predicted that at least larger, well-known technology companies would take the agency's data security recommendations into account — if only to reduce the business risk of federal investigations. "I think everyone can agree that industry needs to do a better job, writ large, on addressing Internet of Things security issues," said Justin Brookman, the director of the consumer privacy project at the Center for Democracy & Technology, a nonprofit group in Washington. But, he said, "smaller companies may not notice the report." His group has received financing from companies including Apple, Qualcomm, Verizon and Palantir.

Around 4.9 billion connected items for consumers, enterprises, manufacturing and utilities will be in use this year, according [to estimates from Gartner](#), an information technology research firm. That number is expected to rise to 25 billion by 2020, the company said. One concern that comes with all these devices, the F.T.C. report noted, is that hackers could potentially hijack and misuse intimate information recorded by the technology, perhaps even creating physical safety risks for consumers.

Last year, for instance, an electronics company that marketed what it said were "secure" Internet-connected cameras, allowing parents to remotely monitor young children at home, [settled a complaint](#) by the F.T.C. that lax security practices had exposed its customers to privacy invasions. A security flaw allowed anyone with the cameras' Internet addresses to view, and in some cases hear, what was happening in customers' homes, the agency said.

The F.T.C. report recommended that companies consider putting limits on the volume of information their devices collect from consumers and on the amount of time they retain those records. But companies may be reluctant to adopt those practices because data storage costs are decreasing and the ability to quickly analyze huge data sets is increasing. "There are some forces that work against data minimization," said Adam Towvim, the chief executive of TrustLayers, a start-up in Boston that helps companies institute systems for real-time monitoring of their data use.

If a company collected 300 to 400 facts about millions of individual consumers, he said, it would be costly and cumbersome to figure out which details to delete and which were important to retain. Mr. Towvim added: "And you might keep the information in multiple places or you may have derivative uses where you haven't completely aggregated or anonymized it." Even so, regulators said they would be keeping watch to see that makers of connected devices limit the potential security and privacy risks of their products for consumers. "For companies, it will be to their detriment if they don't heed the issues we flag in the report," Ms. Ramirez said. — ***New York Times***

Federal Communications Commission officials warned that the agency will prosecute businesses that block people from using personal Wi-Fi networks.

In a so-called enforcement advisory Tuesday, the FCC said its enforcement bureau has witnessed a "disturbing trend" in which hotels and other commercial establishments block wireless consumers from using personal Wi-Fi hot spots on their premises. It said it would be aggressive in investigating and acting against any blocking.

FCC officials already have cracked down on Marriott International Inc., following an incident in which the hotel chain blocked people from using personal hot spots at Nashville's Gaylord Opryland Hotel & Convention Center. Marriott agreed to settle the matter by paying a \$600,000 civil penalty. Marriott and a hotel industry group, the American Hotel & Lodging Association, petitioned the FCC to change its policy.

But the agency made clear Tuesday that it views any Wi-Fi blocking as unlawful intentional interference with the public's right to use the airwaves. "Consumers must get what they pay for," said Tom Wheeler, the FCC's chairman. "The Communications Act prohibits anyone from willfully or maliciously interfering with authorized radio communications, including Wi-Fi. Marriott's request seeking the FCC's blessing to block guests' use of non-Marriott networks is contrary to this basic principle," he said.

A Marriott spokesman referred Tuesday to a statement the company issued in January that it won't block guests from using personal Wi-Fi devices. "Marriott remains committed to protecting the security of Wi-Fi access in meeting and conference areas at our hotels. We will continue to look to the FCC to clarify appropriate security measures network operators can take to protect customer data, and will continue to work with the industry and others to find appropriate market solutions that do not involve the blocking of Wi-Fi devices," the company said.

Many hotel and convention-center operators have tried to profit by offering Wi-Fi as a paid service. At the same time, many consumers now carry cellular devices or smartphones that can connect to surrounding devices using Wi-Fi, funneling data traffic to and from the Internet without assistance from fixed, commercial Wi-Fi access points.

In their FCC petition, Marriott and the hotel group said blocking consumers' Wi-Fi hot spots was necessary to protect the reliability of their own networks. Some other companies, such as Microsoft Corp. and Google Inc., rejected that argument and weighed in favor of FCC's policy against blocking. Removing protection against such interference "would do harm to consumer welfare and the public interest," Microsoft said in a filing with the agency. Google said that the FCC's policies against blocking "manifestly serve the public interest." – *Wall Street Journal*

A delegation from the Democratic National Committee is visiting Philadelphia today as it nears a decision on which city should host its 2016 convention. DNC Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz and a small team were due to arrive later in the morning. They are expected to be greeted by Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, two of the city's biggest convention boosters, according to a person familiar with Philadelphia's convention bid. The person gave details of the itinerary to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the visit was closed to the press.

DNC spokeswoman Lily Adams confirmed Ms. Wasserman Schultz's visit to Philadelphia, where she will also attend House Democrats' policy retreat, which runs today through Friday. Ms. Adams declined to release details of the trip. Mr. Nutter was expected to help lead a tour of the city's convention venues and historical highlights, such as the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, to remind DNC officials why Philadelphia is the best choice in terms of logistics, hotel rooms, security and convention space, according to the person familiar with the plans.

Philadelphia boosters have emphasized their convention experience and space with the Wells Fargo Center and the recently expanded Philadelphia Convention Center. The city hosted the Republican National Convention in 2000. Officials say they'll be able to handle the \$55 million to \$60 million price tag. Columbus, Ohio, and New York City's Brooklyn borough are also in the running to host the 2016 convention, which brings national media attention and up to \$200 million for the local economy. The DNC's decision is expected in early February. Ms. Wasserman Schultz visited Columbus on Monday and will be in New York City on Friday. – *Associated Press*



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