Opening Statement of Chairman Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology & Subcommittee on Commerce,
Manufacturing, and Trade Joint Subcommittee Hearing
"Understanding the Role of Connected Devices in Recent Cyber Attacks"
November 16, 2016

The explosive growth of connected devices – or the Internet of Things – has the potential to make a major impact on how consumers, industry, and even state governments measure and manage information from their homes and communities.

Companies back in my home state of Michigan are on the leading edge of this industry. From established businesses to startups, businesses are looking to the future and that, undoubtedly, includes IOT. For example, Herman Miller, the furniture manufacturer based in Zeeland, Michigan; the Detroit business accelerator, TechTown; and startup Tome, in Royal Oak, Michigan, are all focused on the future of connectivity, automation, and security with IOT devices.

As we learn more about how these devices can help consumers in their daily lives and how industry is moving to meet consumer demand, it is critically important for all stakeholders to keep security top of mind.

The recent cyber security attacks against Dyn illustrated just how pervasive Internet of Things connected devices are in our daily lives while also demonstrating the balance between functionality and security. Consumers should not be expected to have a degree in computer science to operate the devices they purchase to make their lives a little easier.

While perfect security is an aspirational goal, the increased level of attention these issues have received over the last decade has caught the attention and focus of executives across the country. Basic cyber hygiene, like password vigilance, running routine security scans, and maintaining your online health, is another component that has gained mainstream attention, and I am interested to hear how industry is moving forward to address these issues.

Today's hearing is a good opportunity to learn about what happened in the recent attacks and what issues we should be focused on moving forward. While some may point to government regulation as the answer – I would strongly encourage caution here. This technology moves as fast as the hackers who are constantly trying to work around industry designs. Regulations have never proven capable of keeping up with that rate of change.

I thank both Chairman Burgess and Chairman Walden for holding today's joint hearing and the witnesses for taking the time to come and testify this morning.

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