

Statement of the Honorable Greg P. Walden
Chairman, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Joint Hearing on “Understanding the Role of Connected Devices in Recent
Cyber Attacks”
With the Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade
November 16, 2016

Good morning. We live in a world that is increasingly connected. Our smart phones are now capable of locking and unlocking our front doors at home; turning on lights; and checking the camera for packages left on the doorstep. We are able to measure our steps; check our baby monitors; and record our favorite programs from wherever we have connectivity. We’ll soon be able to commute to our offices in driverless cars, trains, and buses; have our child’s blood sugar checked remotely; and divert import energy resources from town to town efficiently.

These are incredible, potentially life-saving benefits that our society is learning to embrace, but we are also learning that these innovations do not come without cost. This past month, we encountered a Denial of Service attack on a scale never before seen. This attack effectively blocked access to popular sites like Netflix and Twitter by weaponizing unsecured network-connected devices like cameras and DVRs. Once these devices came under the command and control of bad actors, they were used to send a flood of DNS requests that ultimately rendered the DNS servers ineffective. As I understand it, at the beginning of this attack it was virtually impossible to distinguish malicious traffic from other normal traffic, making it particularly difficult to mitigate against the attack.

How do we make ourselves more secure without sacrificing the benefits of innovation and technological advances? The knee-jerk reaction might be to regulate the Internet of Things, and while I am not taking that off the table, the question is whether we need a more holistic solution. The United States can’t

regulate the world. Standards applied to American-designed, American-manufactured, or American-sold device won't capture the millions of devices purchased by the billions of people around the world.

Any sustainable and effective solution will require input from all members of the ecosystem for the so-called "Internet of Things." We'll need a concerted effort to improve not only device security, but also coordinate network security and improve the relationship between industry and security researchers. We're all in this together and industry, government, researchers, and consumers will need to take responsibility for securing the Internet of Things.

Today we'll hear from a panel of distinguished witnesses on some of the approaches that can be brought to bear on this challenge. My hope is that this hearing will help to sustain and accelerate conversations on our collective security and fostering the innovation that makes the Internet the greatest engine of communications and commerce the world has known. I thank the witnesses for their willingness to come and share their expertise. I'm looking forward to your testimony.