

## Research



# The President Responds to Washington Post Article that Reports Possible FTC Enforcement Power Over t

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | APRIL 27, 2010

The Washington Post is reporting (see article [here](#)) that the House-passed financial regulation reform bill would give enforcement power over the internet to the Federal Trade Commission. Specifically, it “would allow the FTC to issue rules on a fast track and permit the agency to impose civil penalties on companies that hurt consumers.”

From one perspective, this make sense. I have long felt that the Federal Communications Commission should be reformed to be more like the FTC. So, for example, instead of writing rigid rules about “net neutrality” instead monitor competition in communications industries and impose remedies if cases of unfair competition are found. Makes sense, especially since the media are changing too rapidly to anticipate the nature of competition and the form of future business models. The FCC is always fighting the last war.

Unfortunately, it appears that nobody has any idea exactly what these expedited rulemaking is intended to accomplish; speculation focuses on net neutrality in disguise or limitations on acquisition of private information. And it certainly doesn’t have anything to do with financial regulation reform. It reeks of another backroom deal that end-runs a transparent and open policy process. Since bad process usually begets bad policy, there is much to fear.