U.S. International Trade Commission

Management Letter: Wireless Program Management

OIG-ML-16-11

May 12, 2016

Office of Inspector General

The U.S. International Trade Commission is an independent, nonpartisan, quasi-judicial federal agency that provides trade expertise to both the legislative and executive branches of government, determines the impact of imports on U.S. industries, and directs actions against certain unfair trade practices, such as patent, trademark, and copyright infringement. USITC analysts and economists investigate and publish reports on U.S. industries and the global trends that affect them. The agency also maintains and publishes the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States.

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UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, DC 20436

May 12, 2016

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Chairman Broadbent:

During our evaluation of USITC's wireless defense, we determined that the Commission had inappropriately disabled non-Commission wireless networks.

The Commission configured its wireless defense system to identify all non-Commission wireless networks as "Malicious" even if not attached to USITC's network. The Commission also configured its wireless defense system to "Contain" (i.e., disable) networks it had labeled as "Malicious." As a result, the Commission disabled all detected non-Commission wireless networks, which included Wi-Fi hotspots and the wireless networks of our neighbors. The logs of wireless defense activity reflect that this persisted for months without corrective action.

The severity and persistence of this event indicate that the Commission was not managing its wireless defense program. Therefore, we are terminating the evaluation of the Commission's wireless defense because the identified problems require immediate and substantial changes to management of the wireless defense program.

We are making two recommendations to address this issue. Please provide us with your management decisions within 30 days.

Recommendation 1: The Commission immediately cease disabling non-Commission wireless networks.

Recommendation 2: Determine why the Commission was unaware that it had disabled non-Commission wireless networks.

Philip M. Heneghan
Inspector General

"Thacher's Calculating Instrument" developed by Edwin Thacher in the late 1870s. It is a cylindrical, rotating slide rule able to quickly perform complex mathematical calculations involving roots and powers quickly. The instrument was used by architects, engineers, and actuaries as a measuring device.

To Promote and Preserve the Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Integrity of the U.S. International Trade Commission

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