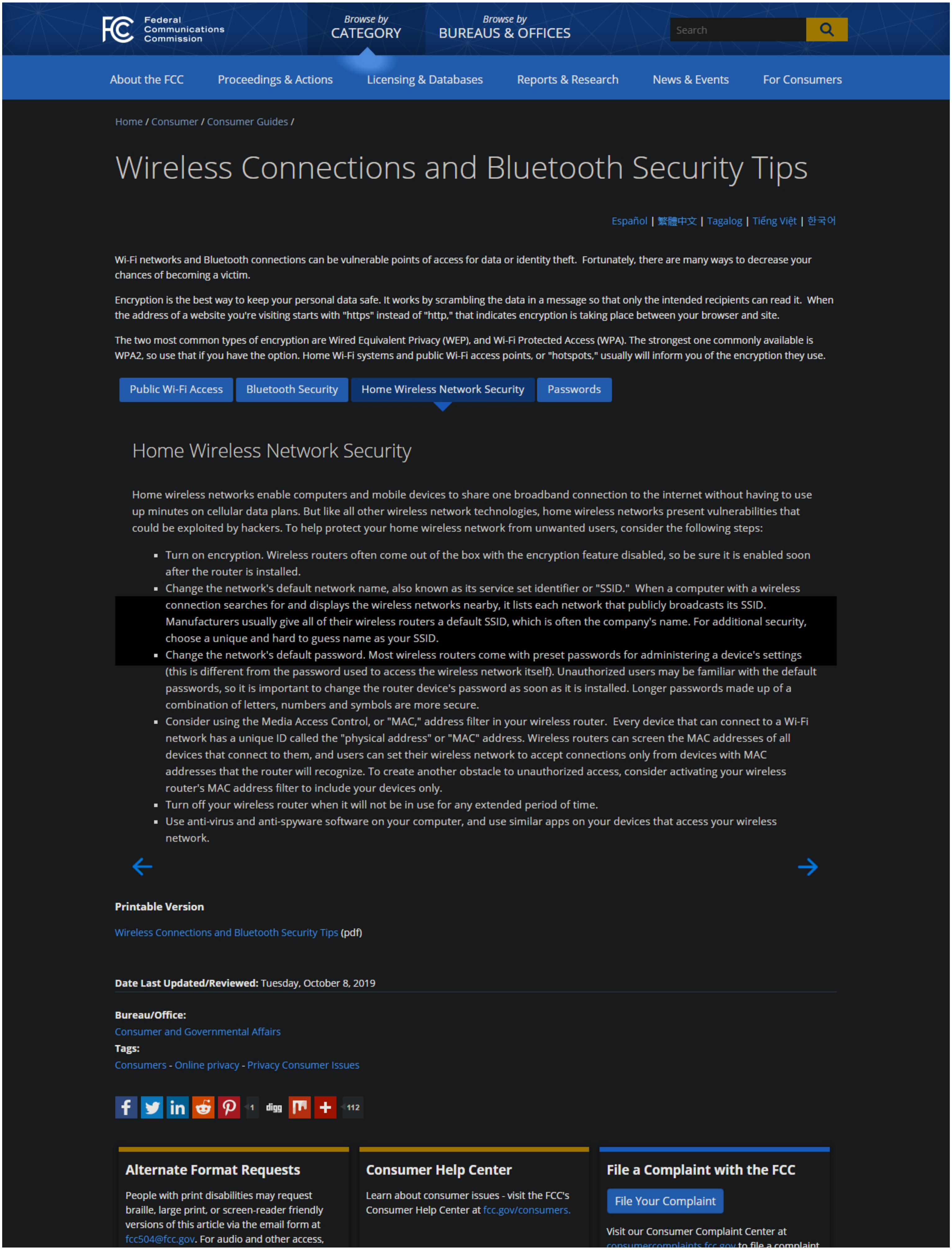

Wireless Connections and Bluetooth Security Tips

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Wi-Fi networks and Bluetooth connections can be vulnerable points of access for data or identity theft. Fortunately, there are many ways to decrease your chances of becoming a victim.

Encryption is the best way to keep your personal data safe. It works by scrambling the data in a message so that only the intended recipients can read it. When the address of a website you're visiting starts with "https" instead of "http," that indicates encryption is taking place between your browser and site.

The two most common types of encryption are Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP), and Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA). The strongest one commonly available is WPA2, so use that if you have the option. Home Wi-Fi systems and public Wi-Fi access points, or "hotspots," usually will inform you of the encryption they use.

Home Wireless Network Security

Home wireless networks enable computers and mobile devices to share one broadband connection to the internet without having to use up minutes on cellular data plans. But like all other wireless network technologies, home wireless networks present vulnerabilities that could be exploited by hackers. To help protect your home wireless network from unwanted users, consider the following steps:

- Turn on encryption. Wireless routers often come out of the box with the encryption feature disabled, so be sure it is enabled soon after the router is installed.
- Change the network's default network name, also known as its service set identifier or "SSID." When a computer with a wireless connection searches for and displays the wireless networks nearby, it lists each network that publicly broadcasts its SSID. Manufacturers usually give all of their wireless routers a default SSID, which is often the company's name. For additional security, choose a unique and hard to guess name as your SSID.
- Change the network's default password. Most wireless routers come with preset passwords for administering a device's settings (this is different from the password used to access the wireless network itself). Unauthorized users may be familiar with the default passwords, so it is important to change the router device's password as soon as it is installed. Longer passwords made up of a combination of letters, numbers and symbols are more secure.
- Consider using the Media Access Control, or "MAC," address filter in your wireless router. Every device that can connect to a Wi-Fi network has a unique ID called the "physical address" or "MAC" address. Wireless routers can screen the MAC addresses of all devices that connect to them, and users can set their wireless network to accept connections only from devices with MAC addresses that the router will recognize. To create another obstacle to unauthorized access, consider activating your wireless router's MAC address filter to include your devices only.
- Turn off your wireless router when it will not be in use for any extended period of time.
- Use anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your computer, and use similar apps on your devices that access your wireless network.

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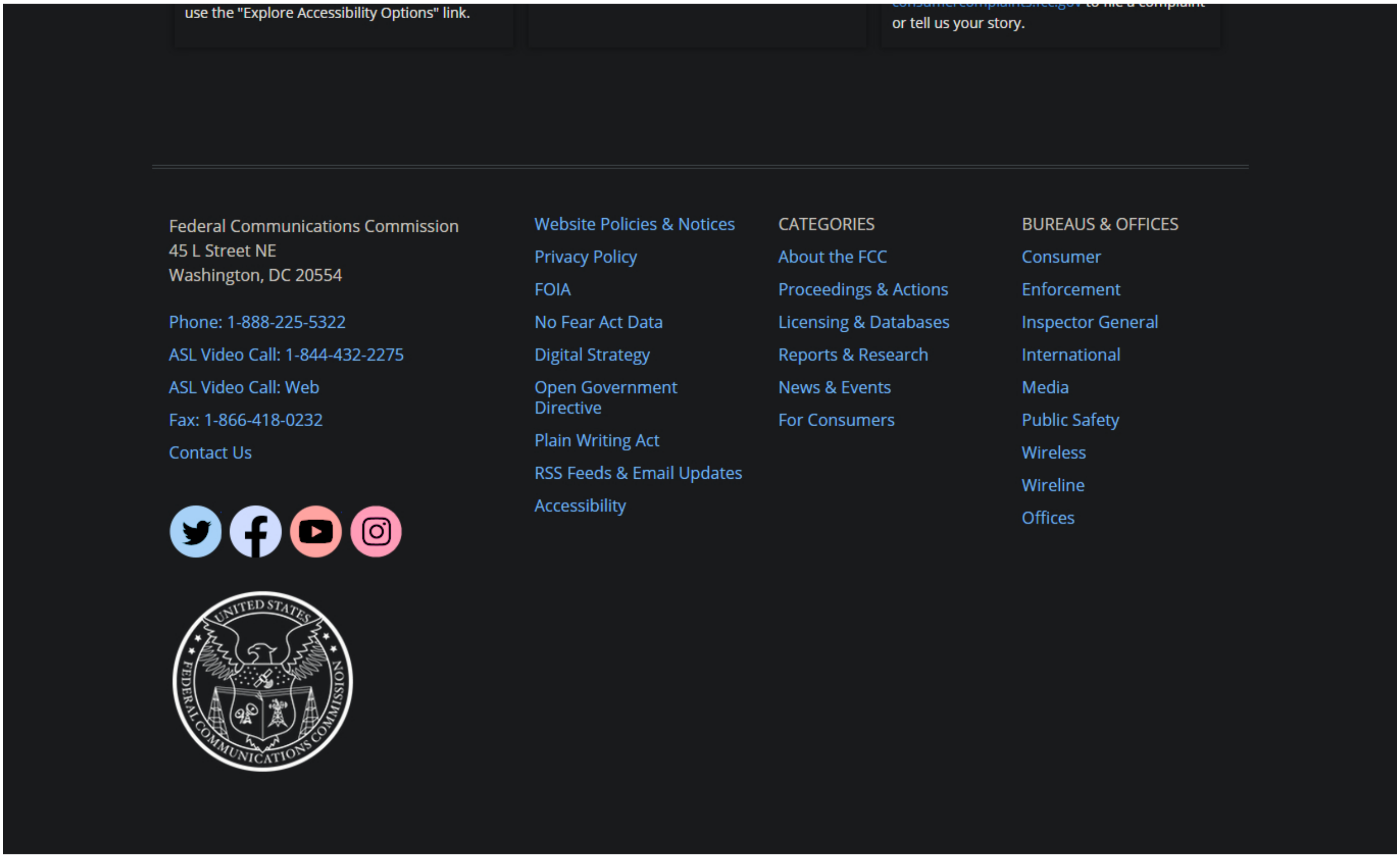

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