

## Corporatists Conducting Illegal Surveillance

by Yukari Iwatani Kane via Kismo - WSJ Tuesday, Apr 26 2011, 12:26am  
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### Your SmartPhone is smarter than you think

*Once again Corporatists have been busted conducting illegal surveillance on citizens. Steve Jobs of Apple is squealing that his company doesn't track and record users' locations, [he points the finger](#) squarely at data and communications juggernaut, GOOGLE; however, there's that 'little matter' of undeclared keystroke recording on iPhones, Steve, you reprehensible lying, Corporatist, pig! Corporatists are ALL tarred with the same brush and will suffer the same fate for turning on the people.*

*We should never forget that LIAR Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google, formed an unholy [surveillance partnership with the CIA](#) after stating publicly that Google wouldn't abuse data information -- I mean the SPYING, MURDERING, CIA, Schmidt, for Christ's sake!*



**Steve Jobs (left) and Eric Schmidt**

### House Presses Apple, Google, Others on Location-Tracking Practices

A House committee that oversees privacy issues sent letters to six developers of mobile operating systems on Monday—including Apple Inc. and Google Inc.—seeking more information about whether they are tracking users' locations, as the scrutiny expands to the broader industry.

In the version of the letter sent to Apple Chief Executive Steve Jobs, the House Energy and Commerce Committee asked him to respond to questions such as: "What location data do devices running your operating system track, use, store, or share?" and "Why does the device track, use, store, or share that data?" It asked him to respond no later than May 9.

The committee sent similar letters to Microsoft Corp., Nokia Corp., Research in Motion Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Co. in addition to Apple and Google. They were signed by Chairman Fred Upton (R., Mich.) and four subcommittee chairmen.

Pressure has been mounting for companies—particularly Apple and Google—to respond in detail to questions about their location-gathering practices. Researchers last week found that Apple's iPhones store unencrypted databases containing location information that sometimes stretch back several months. Documents and data analyzed by The Wall Street Journal also found that Google's Android smartphones, as well as iPhones, regularly transmit their locations back to the respective companies.

The privacy policies and tracking practices of mobile-phone makers and app developers have come under increased scrutiny as cellphones become more sophisticated and people put more of their personal data into their phones. Google and Apple are particularly in the spotlight because their smartphones are some of the fastest-selling devices and together account for a major portion of the market.

Such issues—the focus of a Wall Street Journal investigative series called What They Know—have lately attracted the attention of a number of Democrats in Congress. Last week, for example, Sen. Al Franken (D., Minn.) and Rep. Ed Markey (D., Mass.) have also sent letters to Mr. Jobs. Mr. Markey has called for a congressional investigation. The letters sent Monday also point to growing interest among House Republicans

Earlier on Monday, the attorney general of Illinois, Lisa Madigan, called on both companies to provide specifics on what information they are storing and how long they are storing it, as well as the data's purpose. Outside of the U.S., South Korean telecommunications regulators have requested more information.

In Tampa, Fla., two iPhone users filed a suit seeking class-action status in federal court in Tampa, Fla., asserting that they wouldn't have bought their phones had they known that Apple was tracking their locations.

A Google spokesman declined to comment on the latest letters by the House committee and Ms. Madigan. An Apple spokeswoman didn't respond to requests for comment.

A Nokia spokeswoman said the location data it collects "is only stored in the device, sent or collected when the user chooses to use such services."

Officials at Microsoft, H-P, Nokia and RIM couldn't immediately be reached.

Apple and Google have both said previously that users can prevent the data collection by turning off location-based services, though doing so limits functions such as maps. A Wall Street Journal investigation found that turning off location services doesn't disable the storage, at least on the iPhone 4 that it used to run tests.

While Google responded to questions about location tracking last week by reiterating its past stance, Apple has so far refrained from commenting on the matter.

Apple, however, has filed multiple patent applications that refer to location-tracking technology. One application filed in 2009 and published last month, for example, describes technology that would allow a processor in a mobile device to collect network information and convert it to estimate a user's location, which could be stored on a database on the device and used with various applications.

Apple isn't the only company pursuing location-related patents, which in any case don't necessarily

signal a company's intentions. The company didn't respond to a request for a comment on the patent, which was the subject of an article Monday on the Gawker website.

*(Jennifer Valentino-DeVries contributed to this article.)*

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