



Lawmakers Want Apple and Google Investigated for “building advertising-specific tracking IDs into their mobile operating system”

Description

USA: Collecting individuals’ personal data , images , and “voiceprints” to analyze and sometimes sell and/or share with 3rd parties is often referred to as “Surveillance Capitalism”. Children and even American medical patients are included in this increasingly popular practice. Even the American government buys cell phone location data. Due to growing American opposition to this, lawmakers have requested that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) investigate mobile tracking by Apple and Google.

From Fierce Wireless:

Lawmakers ask FTC to investigate mobile tracking by Apple, Google

By Monica Allevan

Apple and Alphabet’s Google are in the crosshairs again as four lawmakers are calling on the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to investigate how they use their mobile phone operating systems to track consumers.

The Democratic lawmakers sent a letter Friday to FTC Chair Lina Khan saying that Apple and Google knowingly facilitated harmful practices “by building advertising-specific tracking IDs into their mobile operating systems,” the Wall Street Journal reported.

The WSJ noted that both companies have recently taken steps to limit the collection of user data through mobile-ad identifiers – a string of numbers and letters built into iOS and Android.

Now users of both operating systems have a way to opt out of having their identifier transmitted to apps. Last year, Apple introduced a new version of its software that requires

each app to ask the user for permission to access the device's identifier, and Google plans to adopt new privacy restrictions to curtail tracking across apps on Android phones, the WSJ said.

However, until recently, "Apple enabled this tracking ID by default and required consumers to dig through confusing phone settings to turn it off. Google still enables this tracking identifier by default, and until recently did not even provide consumers with an opt-out," the letter said.

The letter was signed by Sen. Ron Wyden (D., Ore.); Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D., Mass.); Sen. Cory Booker (D., N.J.); and Rep. Sara Jacobs (D., Calif.).

Their letter also addressed today's news of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, suggesting prosecutors in states where abortion becomes illegal will soon be able to obtain warrants for location information about anyone who has visited an abortion provider.

"The FTC should investigate Apple and Google's role in transforming online advertising into an intense system of surveillance that incentivizes and facilitates the unrestrained collection and constant sale of Americans' personal data," they wrote, according to the WSJ.

Image: Pixabay

By B.N. Frank

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