

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115
Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641
April 23, 2019

Mr. Sundar Pichai
Chief Executive Officer
Google
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Mr. Pichai:

We are writing in response to concerning reports about a massive database of precise location information on hundreds of millions of consumers known inside Google as “Sensorvault.”¹ According to recent reports, Google tracks and stores precise location information on a huge volume of consumers, including practically every consumer with an Android mobile device, in some cases storing information dating back to 2009.²

The potential ramifications for consumer privacy are far reaching and concerning when examining the purposes for the Sensorvault database and how precise location information could be shared with third parties.

First, according to the reports, Google collects precise location information in numerous ways including from the location history function on Android phones, Google searches, and Google apps that have location enabled.³ Second, precise location information is reportedly collected even when people are not making calls or using apps, which enables Google to track the “whole pattern of life” of an individual.⁴ Finally, Google reportedly never destroys any of the precise location information it captures in the Sensorvault database, and has therefore

¹ *Tracking Phones, Google Is a Dragnet for the Police*, New York Times (Apr. 13, 2019).

² *Google’s Sensorvault Is a Boon for Law Enforcement. This Is How It Works*, New York Times (Apr. 13, 2019).

³ *Id.*

⁴ See note 1.

compiled an extraordinarily detailed picture of the movements and whereabouts of a vast number of consumers stretching back more than a decade.⁵

As part of the Committee's ongoing commitment to protect the privacy of the American people and to understand the benefits and risks of various data collection and use practices, we would like to know the purposes for which Google maintains the Sensorvault database and the extent to which Google shares precise location information from this database with third parties. To that end, please provide answers to the following questions by May 7, 2019:

1. What information does Google store in the Sensorvault database and for what purposes does Google use this information? Please describe each use in detail. If the types of information in the database or the purposes for which such information is used have changed over time, explain any such changes in chronological order.
2. Please describe which affiliates/subsidiaries of Alphabet have access to or use the data or analytics derived from the data in the Sensorvault database.
3. Does Google maintain other databases of precise location information? If so, how does the Sensorvault database differ from other such databases and how is the data from such databases used?
4. Who is able to access the information in the Sensorvault database? Include in your response both the number of Google employees with access to the Sensorvault database and the roles and responsibilities of any persons with access.
5. What are the sources from which Google collects the information maintained in the Sensorvault database and any other database identified in response to question 3? Specifically, describe any Google services, mobile applications, devices, or any other means through which Google obtains the information.
 - a. If consumers are required to "opt in" to the collection of precise location information, describe with specificity how consumers "opt in" to the service, and the notice provided to such consumers about the purposes for which Google collects the information. If any such "opt in" has changed over time, describe those changes.
 - b. If consumers may "opt out" of the collection of precise location information, describe with specificity how consumers "opt out" and the notice provided to such consumers about the purposes for which Google collects the information. If any such "opt out" has changed over time, describe those changes.
6. To the extent that a consumer has requested that precise location data not be shared with Google, through opt-outs or other mechanisms, do Android phones continue to collect

⁵ *Id.*

precise location data on the device or store such precise location information on the device? If so, to the extent that the consumer subsequently allows location data to be shared with Google, is that formerly stored precise location information transmitted to Google? Under what other circumstances would the device continue to transmit precise location information to Google when a consumer has requested that precise location information not be shared with Google?

7. How accurate is the precise location information stored in the Sensorvault database? Include in your response both the accuracy of the precise location information and the accuracy of attributing such information to a single individual.
8. What controls, if any, does Google provide to consumers to limit or revoke Google's access to the information stored in the Sensorvault database? Does Google provide consumers a means to delete data stored in Sensorvault? If so, describe in detail how consumers may do so.
9. What is Google's retention policy with respect to precise location information stored in the Sensorvault database? For what purpose(s) does Google maintain precise location information going back to 2009?
10. Does Google share, sell, license, or otherwise disclose precise location information (including deidentified data) from the Sensorvault database with any third parties other than law enforcement? If so, identify the types of businesses receiving such information and the purpose for disclosing any such information. If the data is deidentified, provide a description of how it is deidentified.

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In addition to providing the written responses requested, please make arrangements to provide Committee staff with a briefing on these topics to occur no later than May 10, 2019. Thank you for your attention. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Goldman of the Majority Staff at (202) 225-2927 and Melissa Froelich of the Minority Staff at (202)-226-3641.

Sincerely,



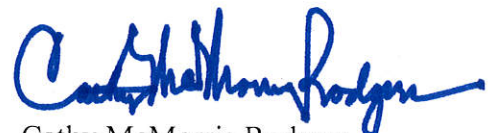
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