

Never Mind Facebook, Google Is The All-Seeing 'Big Brother' You Should Know About

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The Cambridge Analytica scandal put Facebook through the wringer in recent weeks, losing the company \$100 billion in stock value and prompting a global debate on internet privacy.

The social media giant was forced to apologize and overhaul its privacy and data sharing practices, but it still remains in the media spotlight and in the crosshairs of the Federal Trade Commission, which says it may be liable for hundreds of millions of dollars worth of fines.

But amid all the furor, one monolithic entity has continued to harvest data from [billions of people](#) worldwide. The data gathered includes a precise log of your every move and every internet search you've ever made, every email you've ever sent, your workout routine, your favourite food, and every photo you've ever taken. And you have

allowed it to happen to yourself, for the sake of better service and more relevant advertising.

Google is a 'Big Brother' with capabilities beyond George Orwell's wildest nightmares. These capabilities are all the more chilling after Google's parent company, Alphabet Inc., cut its famous "don't be evil" line from its code of conduct in 2015.

Everything you've ever searched for on any of your devices is recorded and stored by Google. It's done to better predict your future searches and speed up and streamline your browsing. You can clear your search history, but it only works for that particular device. Google still keeps a record of everything. [Click here](#) to see everything you've ever searched on a Google device.

The same goes for every app and extension you use. If it's connected to Google, your data is stored. That means that your Facebook messages are not only farmed out to companies like Cambridge Analytica, Google also has them from the Facebook app you use.

YouTube, which is a Google subsidiary, also stores a history of every video you watch. It will know if you've listened to Linkin Park's 'In the End' 3,569 times, or watched hours of flat-earth conspiracy theory videos.

Likewise, any file you've ever stored on Google Drive, any Google Calendar event you've attended, any photo you've stored on Google Photos, and every email you've ever

sent are all stored. You can access a copy of all of this data by requesting a link from Google [here](#).

Perhaps what hits home the hardest, though, is that Google keeps track of where you are and how you got there, at all times. If you have a smartphone, there's a good chance it runs the Android operating system, considering Android phones [account](#) for 82 percent of the global market share. That's over 2 billion monthly active users.

And, unless you've disabled this feature, [clicking here](#) will show you a list of every journey you've ever made with your phone, including an estimate of how you traveled there. If you're back and forth between work and home at the same time every day, Google knows this is your commute. That heavy traffic warning Google maps gives you on your drive home; Google knows there's a traffic jam because it knows that every Android phone in every car is moving slower than they usually do at that time of day.

Google doesn't do this behind your back. On a desktop, Google Chrome allows sites to access your computer's camera and microphone by default. On a smartphone, agreeing to an app's terms of service allows the app to do nearly anything, from accessing your phone's camera and location, to recording your calls and log your messages. The Facebook app, for example, requires 44 such permissions.

It is possible to opt out of most of Google's tracking – including search history, location timeline and targeted advertising – but it takes a bit of rooting around in settings menus, and you have to know about the option first. And of course, [Google](#) says it's not associating the [data](#) with you, as a person – instead, it's linked to your "advertising ID," and never shared unless you want it to be. Or unless a government requests that Google hands it over – which US government agencies alone have [done](#) almost 17,000 times in just the first half of 2017, with over 80 percent of requests fulfilled, at least to some extent.

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