



May 17, 2010

The Hon. Jon Leibowitz
Chairman
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC
20580

Dear Chairman Leibowitz,

I am writing to ask the Federal Trade Commission to investigate Google Inc.'s "WiSpy" debacle, in which the Internet giant's Street View cars snooped for years on home WiFi networks and gathered private communications data sent over them.

Less than a month ago Google was publicly asserting that it did not collect private WiFi "payload" data. Last Friday Google changed course. It abruptly claimed it had made a "mistake" and hadn't realized its Street View cars were snooping on private WiFi networks all along.

Google has demonstrated a history of pushing the envelope and then apologizing when its overreach is discovered. Given its recent record of privacy abuses, there is absolutely no reason to trust anything the Internet giant claims about its data collection policies.

We call on the Federal Trade Commission to document what data Google has been gathering, for how long and what the company has done with it. Google's suggestion for a third-party audit is inadequate. That would be like getting to pick and pay the referees in a championship basketball game.

The Commission has the authority and public trust necessary to get to the bottom of Google's dubious data collection practices and reveal exactly how consumers' privacy has been compromised and what remedies are required. The Commission must determine what Google knew and when Google knew it. We urge you to launch an investigation immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Simpson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

John M. Simpson
Consumer Advocate

Cc: Commissioner Julie Brill; Commissioner William E. Kovacic, Commissioner J. Thomas Rosch; Commissioner Edith Ramirez; David Vladeck, Director Bureau of Consumer Protection