



Dec. 15, 2011

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa  
City Hall  
200 North Main Street  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012

Council President Eric Garcetti  
City Hall, Room 475  
200 North Main Street  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012

Dear Mayor Villaraigosa and Council President Garcetti,

City Council should be commended for voting 12-0 yesterday to abandon plans to put the City's 13,000 law enforcement employees on Google's "cloud" based email system. As we warned when the project was launched two years ago, despite Google's promises, the Internet giant simply could not meet security needs for sensitive information. In addition to amending the contract with Google and CSC there is another step you must take immediately.

As we wrote you in October, there are serious problems with the way top officials in the City's Information Technology Agency appear on a Google website promoting Google Apps For Government. (Read the October letter here: <http://www.consumerwatchdog.org/resources/ltrvillaraigosa102411.pdf>.) As we pointed out then, Google Apps has failed Los Angeles, but the deceptive marketing video gives the false impression that the system was successful here. That creates a first impression of credibility for Google that will mislead other communities. Given the failed Los Angeles Google project, you must demand that the inaccurate video be removed immediately. As long as it remains, the City is complicit in Google's deceptive marketing. You have an obligation to tell the truth about the Los Angeles experience and how Google could not meet security requirements

Here is a link to the video in which both Randi Levin, ITA general manager and chief technology office, and Kevin Crawford, ITA assistant general manager, appear extolling the supposed benefits of the Google system: <http://googleenterprise.blogspot.com/2009/12/why-city-of-los-angeles-chose-google.html>. You reach the link from the Google Apps For Government website by clicking on "success stories" and then on "City of Los Angeles."

Ms. Levin brings the slick marketing video by saying, "The City of Los Angeles has about 44 different departments ranging from the Los Angeles Police Department, the Fire Department, the Department of Transportation..." The clear implication is that Google Apps For Government meets the Police Department's needs.

Later in the video Mr. Walker makes a clear reference to the LAPD's requirements. He says, "We have other departments that have specific legal requirements for how their data is handled. The data will never, never change ownership. It is always owned by the City of LA."

"We are going to see huge productivity savings particularly when we train the organization how to use shared documents," Ms. Levin says. She concludes the video by saying, "Time, resources, energy -- all of that will be a benefit to the city. It will be a benefit to the employee. There are just many, many good things that are going to come out of this."

This blatant endorsement of Google's product by City employees was undoubtedly the result of the \$250,000 from CSC, the implementer of the project, for Los Angeles to tout Google Apps to other municipalities. The deal approved yesterday ensures that the City can keep that money. What is imperative now is that Los Angeles not allow itself to be used by Google to deceptively market its product.

Google's failure and inability to deliver on its promises were clear as early as a year ago when Ms. Levin sent a letter to Google and CSC. She wrote, "These failures are wholly unacceptable to the City of Los Angeles. CSC and Google have repeatedly committed to meet particular deliverables on specific dates, only to reveal, at the last minute, that the set deliverables/dates will not be met. CSC and Google's behavior goes beyond a mere failure to communicate in a timely manner, and instead, on several occasions, has risen to the level of misrepresentation."

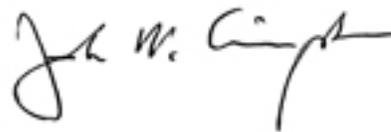
That is the true story of Google's efforts in Los Angeles. The problem is Google not only made misrepresentations to the City, but also continues to make them to potential Google Apps For Government customers by using the deceptive video featuring Ms. Levin and Mr. Walker. It matters because other governments and public entities -- for instance Chicago Public Schools -- are actively considering implementing Google Apps. Allowing the video to remain on Google's website misleads potential customers. Ultimately it can only tarnish the City's reputation.

You have an obligation to be truthful about Google's failure in Los Angeles. We call upon you to demand the immediate removal of the misleading video from Google's Apps For Government Website.

Sincerely,



Jamie Court  
President



John M. Simpson  
Privacy Project Director

CC: Wendy Greuel, Controller  
City Council Members