

# Google hidden location data collection

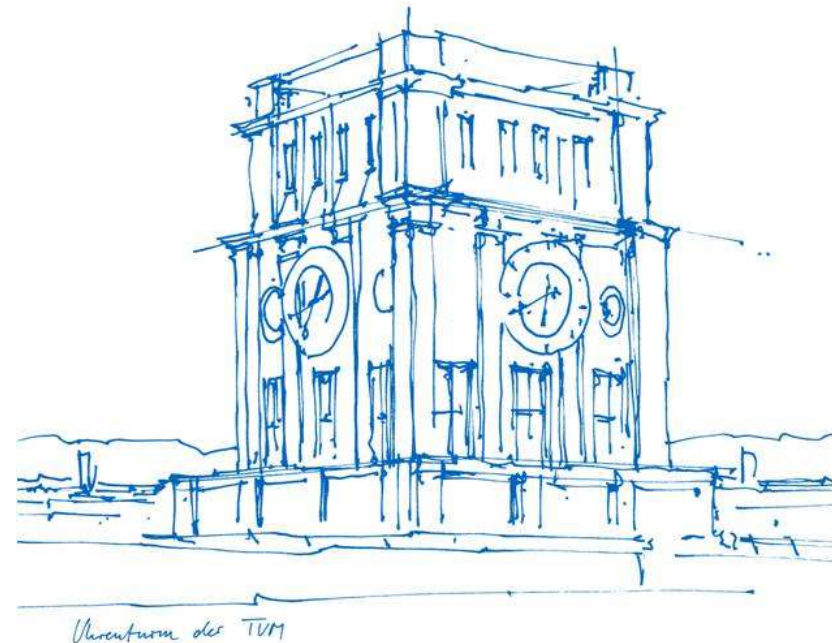
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# What happened?

- Update to the Firebase Cloud Messaging Service in January 2017
- Cell tower ID transmitted to Google
- Accurate determination of location through multiple Cell IDs

API Sandbox

LocationAPI

Geocoding

Maps

Timezone

User Reports

User reports

Device reports

Bulk Requests

Account details

Support

LocationAPI will return a location if you provide Cell Towers, WiFi APs near a device. View the [API documentation here](#).

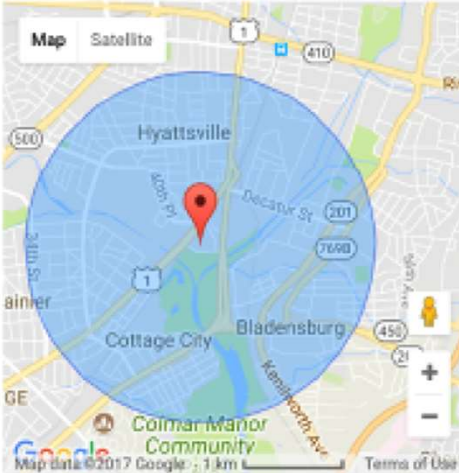
Request: 1 Cell - CDMA

```
1 {
2   "token": " ",
3   "radio": "cdma",
4   "mnc": 18,
5   "cells": [{
6     "lac": 3,
7     "cid": 297
8   }],
9   "address": 1
10 }
```

Response:

```
1 {
2   "status": "ok",
3   "balance": 99,
4   "lat": 38.94612,
5   "lon": -76.943791,
6   "accuracy": 1660,
7   "address": "Charles Armentrout"
8 }
```

Location:



# Who is affected?

- GPS and Google location services turned off
- No SIM card inserted
- Haven't used any apps
- Factory reset

→ Any Phone with Android OS connected to the internet

# Googles response

- Practice confirmed
- “...using Cell ID codes as an additional signal to further improve the speed and performance of message delivery.”
- Google claims not to use this data but provide advertisers with it
- Promise to stop this practice by end of November

# Final thoughts

- Gray area of privacy policy

*“When you use Google services, we may collect and process information about your actual location. We use various technologies to determine location, including IP address, GPS, and other sensors that may, for example, provide Google with information on nearby devices, Wi-Fi access points and cell towers.”*

- Risk of third party access
- No confirmation of stopped practice

Any Questions?

# Sources

- <https://qz.com/1131515/google-collects-android-users-locations-even-when-location-services-are-disabled/>
- <http://www.zdnet.com/article/google-admits-tracking-users-location-even-when-setting-disabled/>