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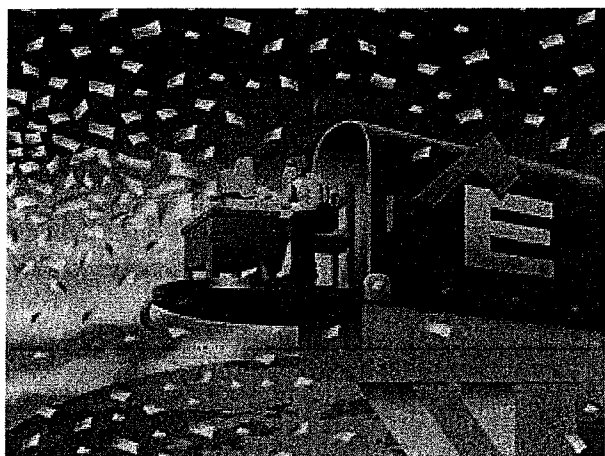
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## The End Of Privacy

*Is privacy still possible? For a lot of people, the answer is no. That cell phone in your pocket? It's leaving a digital trail. The Facebook quiz you took? It may be scraping your personal information. In this series, Martin Kaste explores the giant pool of personal data we're creating and privacy in the digital age.*



Corbis

### Digital Data Make For A Really Permanent Record

(2) (31)

Information doesn't fade the way it used to. Records once forgotten in long-lost files are now searchable online — perhaps forever. Some computer researchers are looking for ways to give data a life span. But others think we should adapt to a new reality of data that will never die.

On All Things Considered

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Timeline: Privacy And The Law

### Digital Bread Crumbs: Following Your Cell Phone Trail (14) (46)



October 28, 2009 If you use a mobile phone, you're leaving a record of where you've been. But where does your phone say you are? If it relies on cell phone towers for that information, your location may be vague. GPS-enabled phones are more specific. The difference between the two can be miles wide.

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### Is Your Facebook Profile As Private As You Think? (41) (99)

October 27, 2009 A growing number of companies are trawling social networks looking to scrape up data about you and your friends. For instance, that Facebook

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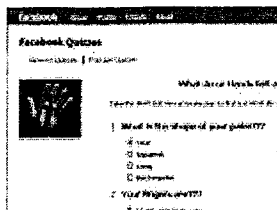


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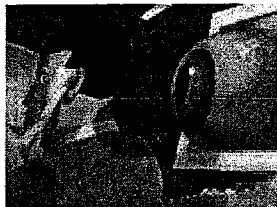
quiz you just took? It opened up your photos, political views — even your sexual preference — to the stranger who wrote it.

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## Online Data Present A Privacy Minefield (16) (48)

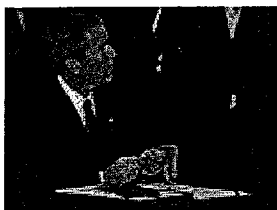


October 26, 2009 Is privacy still possible? For a lot of people, the answer is no, as companies collect personal data in ever-increasing volumes. It flows from online sources — everything from gambling sites to dating services. Even some of your medical information is fair game.

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## Timeline: Privacy And The Law (0) (12)



October 28, 2009 Here, key moments that have shaped your privacy in the digital age.

## Why Does NPR.org Use Cookies? (6) (6)

October 27, 2009 Kinsey Wilson, of NPR digital media, responds to a comment on NPR.org from a reader concerned about the site's use of tracking cookies. According to Wilson, those bits of text stored on a user's computer improve site navigation while keeping the user anonymous.

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September 22, 2011, 6:00 am

# Changes to OnStar's Privacy Terms Rile Some Users

By JOHN R. QUAIN



OnStar command center in Detroit.

A new set of terms and conditions for OnStar, the General Motors-supported safety and connectivity system, is generating privacy concerns among some subscribers, many of whom have long raised questions about the potential for abuse. For years, some G.M. car and truck owners have posted elaborate instructions to Internet forums and user groups detailing how to disable built-in OnStar equipment to prevent any tracking of their vehicles.

Last week, OnStar sent e-mails notifying customers of changes in the company's policies. Some customers say two changes in those terms were of particular concern from the standpoint of privacy.

The first regards what happens when a customer cancels the service. Until now, when OnStar service stopped, so did the vehicle's two-way communications system. As of Dec. 1, however, that will not necessarily be the case. Vehicles of owners who no longer subscribe could still be monitored via the system's still-active two-way cellular link.

The second policy change concerns the potential use of the data collected by OnStar, which includes information like the vehicle's speed and location, current odometer reading, driver seat-belt use and air-bag deployment. Under the new terms, OnStar reserves the right to share that information with other companies and organizations, even data culled from motorists who no longer subscribe to the service but who have left the two-way communications connection open.

"But the customer has a choice," Vijay Iyer, an OnStar spokesman, said in a telephone interview. Under the new terms, a canceling subscriber can request that the two-way connection be shut off, he said. Customers who have already canceled the service are no longer connected via the two-way link, he confirmed.

As a default position, however, OnStar maintains the cellular connection after the subscription is canceled, a practice intended to collect data that could be useful to municipalities, for example, trying to improve traffic flow or to first responders attempting to determine the severity of a crash before arriving at the scene. Mr. Iyer said that there were related services that OnStar could offer in the future, like remote vehicle diagnostics.

OnStar has not started selling data that it collects, Mr. Iyer said. Under the new terms, data would be made anonymous and aggregated to allay privacy concerns. However, the open-ended language in the terms suggests

that OnStar could, without reproach, sell the information to local governments, to companies offering location-based services and to marketers interested in directing messages to specific groups of drivers.

Jonathan Zdziarski, a forensic scientist, canceled his subscription based on the change in terms. His and other subscribers' concerns range from invasive marketing techniques to unintended security breaches. Hackers, meanwhile, have proved how anonymous, aggregated data can be cross-referenced with other databases, for example, to identify individual users. Furthermore, law enforcement could issue subpoenas to grab data from an OnStar subscriber under investigation, a practice that is already commonplace with regard to portable navigation devices and cellphones.

The OnStar issue is the latest in a growing list of privacy-related concerns brought about by advances in onboard telematics systems. A Nissan Leaf owner recently uncovered a security hole that allowed anyone to tap into a vehicle's speed and location information. Researchers at iSec Partners, a cybersecurity consultancy, have shown how a car's wireless connections can be exploited, using a technique known as war texting, to break into a vehicle. Continuing to gather information about a car and maintain a two-way connection, some might argue, may leave owners vulnerable to new threats.

For OnStar, the issue is one of how to monetize this new world of customer data and services. The company is under increasing pressure from a new wave of free car-related apps for smartphones that mimic much of what has differentiated OnStar in the past. For its part, OnStar has not said to whom it would sell this information or how the data would be rendered anonymous, but as the backlash from customers has demonstrated, it must move carefully.

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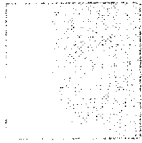
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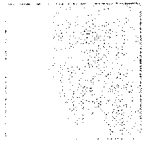
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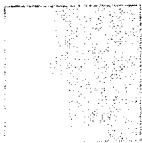
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