


Facebook, Google Hit With Lawsuits for Secret Location Tracking

Tech giants filed location histories, even when users opted out of the feature, lawsuits claim

[Sean Burch](#) |

 Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg Testifies At Joint Senate Commerce/Judiciary Hearing

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Facebook and Google have both been hit with lawsuits claiming that the Silicon Valley giants secretly track their users' locations against their will and use the information to pad its advertising business.

The class action complaint against Facebook, which was filed by Brett Heeger last Friday in San Francisco federal court, said the social network tracks its users even after they've opted out of its "Location History" feature.

"Facebook secretly tracks, logs, and stores location data for all of its users—including those who have sought to limit the information about their locations that Facebook may store in its servers by choosing to turn Location History off," the suit said. "Because Facebook misleads users and engages in this deceptive practice, collecting and storing private location data against users' expressed choice, Plaintiff brings this class action on behalf of himself and similarly situated Facebook users."

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Heeger said users aren't aware of Facebook's "secret tracking" unless they download their data from the company and search "multiple levels of obscure folders." He claimed he set up his privacy settings to stop Facebook from tracking his location, but the company continued to do so. Facebook used "estimated locations," using his IP address and WiFi data, to continue tracking his location, Heeger claimed. The action violated federal and state wiretapping laws, according to the suit.

Facebook benefited from tracking Heeger, the suit claimed, because the company makes money off location-based advertisements. The complaint seeks unspecified monetary damages.

Facebook, in a statement to TheWrap, pushed back against the lawsuit, saying its location tracking policy has always been transparent.

"Our Data Policy and related disclosures explain our practices relating to location data and provide information about the privacy