



June 16, 2010

MADIGAN INVESTIGATES GOOGLE STREET VIEW***Illinois Attorney General Madigan Requests Detailed Response from Google Regarding the Collection of Personal Information From Wireless Networks***

Chicago—Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that her office is investigating whether Google collected personal information from Illinois residents while gathering data for its popular Street View service.

“It is disturbing that Google has been collecting this data since 2007,” Madigan said. “We have asked Google to explain in detail exactly what information it has collected and what it is doing with the information. Illinoisans deserve these answers.”

Google Street View allows users to view actual photos when using other Google services such as Google’s map service or driving directions service. Street View vehicles travel all over the world to photograph homes, buildings and other landmarks to include in those location-based services. The Street View vehicles also are equipped to capture WiFi network data, which includes a network’s service set identifier, or SSID, and router identifier, or MAC address. Google has said that it collects this data to improve its maps and direction services.

Google has acknowledged that its equipment also collected and stored samples of so-called payload data from computer users who were logged on to open WiFi networks at the time the vehicles passed through certain areas. Payload data can include user emails, passwords, and browsing activity. According to Google, the data that was sent over encrypted WiFi networks was not stored.

Madigan and Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley sent a joint letter to Google on June 9, 2010, requesting detailed information on Google Street View’s collection of payload data from Illinois and Massachusetts residents.

In public statements, Google has indicated that the Street View cars have been grounded, and that they are no longer collecting WiFi data.

“Google is asking consumers to take them at their word,” Madigan said. “My office takes issues concerning privacy and the security of personal information very seriously, and we are investigating Google’s actions to determine whether any laws were broken and what steps must be taken to protect the privacy of Illinois residents.”

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