



## Google Is Collecting Information On Public School Students – Here's How



- [Google](#)

*[Submitted by Mike Krieger via Liberty Blitzkrieg blog.](#)*

As a new parent, the idea of sending my children to public school is a frightening thought. The more you read, the more you realize the importance of extreme vigilance when it comes to what's happening at whatever place you send your kids to for majority of their day. Quite often, parents are simply left completely in the dark about some very important matters.

One such example relates to Google's penetration of the U.S. public school system, and how the company employs a loophole in order to collect data on children. Google achieves this by referring to itself as a "school official" under the law. I truly wish I was making this up.

From [the Washington Post](#):

*Google is a major player in U.S. education. In fact, in many public schools around the country, it's technically a "school official." And that designation means parents may not get a chance to opt out of having information about their children shared with the online advertising giant.*

*The combined allure of Google's free suite of productivity tools and cheap laptops that use the company's Web-based ChromeOS operating system have made Google's products a popular choice at schools around the country. And the company's growing dominance is [raising concern from some privacy advocates](#) who allege it is using some student data for its own benefit.*

**Google's [standard agreement](#) for providing its education suite defines the company as a "school official" for the purpose of that student privacy law.** *In Google's case, the company is providing software that*



*districts might otherwise have to develop or support themselves, such as email services or tools that help students digitally collaborate on assignments.*

*But schools are supposed to have "direct control" of how a company or individual uses and maintains education records to deem them a "school official," according to the department's regulation. Khaliah Barnes, an associate director at the Electronic Privacy Information Center or EPIC, argues that isn't happening with many ed tech providers, including Google.*

*"The schools don't have access to Google's servers or a lot of the way that it uses the information because it is proprietary," she said. In 2012, EPIC [brought a lawsuit](#) against the Education Department in an attempt to stop the government from interpreting the law in ways it argued could allow schools to share more data about students with less explicit consent, but **the case was later dismissed on standing grounds.***

Why am I not surprised in the least.

**Today, Google and many other tech companies are increasingly part of students' daily classroom lives under the "school official" designation. And that leaves parents in the dark about who has access to an increasingly large cache of information about their children and may compromise their privacy down the line, experts say. But [as previously reported](#), Google said it has "always been firmly committed to keeping student information private and secure."**

Private and secure, ok, but they are still collecting this data aren't they? They are still essentially tracking the activity of little children without their consent or parental consent, are they not?

*Even 20 years ago, parents really didn't expect schools to track more than basic information about their children's school performance — things like attendance and test scores. But the latest generation of educational tech products are cataloging a nearly limitless amount of data on what students do everyday — from emails and chats, to metadata, such as location history, that educators may not even realize is being collected, Barnes said.*

*"The companies themselves aren't transparent, and often times schools even aren't aware of the extent of data collection," Barnes said.*

*"School districts are just generally not providing notice to parents," said Reidenberg.*

You've been warned.



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By Kyle Smith

March 28, 2015 | 5:30pm



Photo: GFA



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Would that bother anyone? Because the above is pretty much going on today, only the team is called Google and the commissioner is the president of the United States.

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