# Mobile Privacy, Security Now A Major Concern

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Hot-button issues of the desktop web shifting to mobile

Privacy, security and the possibility of being tracked across the web by advertisers are all big issues for users of the desktop internet. And now, with mobile phones more sophisticated than ever, the same issues are causing concern for the large percentage of consumers who carry around a wealth of personal data all the time.

Online privacy service provider TRUSTe and Harris Interactive surveyed US smartphone owners in February 2011 about their concerns when using mobile devices.

Their top concern about mobile applications was privacy, followed by security.

Smartphone owners are wary of sharing information via apps, and many do their best to protect themselves with strong passwords and by reading privacy policies.

But just 36% of respondents said they felt in control of their personal information when they used their mobile devices.

Tracking was a particularly sore point, with nearly three-quarters indicating they did not liked being tracked by advertisers on their mobile phones.

While mobile tracking is not as prevalent as tracking on the desktop web, consumers seem especially aware that their phone is a major source of sensitive information.

â€œPeople understand that the phone is extremely personal, that itâ€™s tied to them and that it has a lot of data about them,â€ TRUSTe president Fran Maier told eMarketer.

These mobile security and privacy issues are now receiving media attention as well. Last week, word of a log file that continually tracks the location of an iPhoneâ€”and makes that data available in unencrypted form to anyone who has possession of the physical phoneâ€”made dozens of headlines.

But even as the media speculated about the possibilities for abuse in what many believed was a newly discovered tracking file, reports circulated that such logs are already routinely used by law enforcement agencies without warrants or court orders.

Many of the same legislators who have dipped a toe in the waters of online privacy regulation have called for investigations into Apple and Google in the wake of their mobile privacy scandals, but with the government also the first to take advantage of such features, the tracking-averse public may be left feeling unprotected.

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