

Government tracking assignment



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BUSTER**

Do you know who is tracking your movements when you turn on your cell phone. Or what is being done with that information? These are questions that I recently had to ask myself after reading two insightful articles. The first was by Ronald Bailey called "Your Cellophane Is Spying on You" and the other was by Terry J. Allen entitled "Reach Out and Track Someone". In Ronald Bailey's article, he explores the use of cellular phone tracking technology by law enforcement and their recent attempts to expand the surveillance laws to include more use of cell phones to track users' events without their knowledge.

In addition he gives us some perspective on the idea of a big brother watching over us by examining what a future built on limited privacy expectations might look like. Allen gives us his personal perspective on tracking technology and explores abuses that might arise if we continue down the current path. Both of these articles have given me insight into the use of tracking technology and make me question both the moral and legal ramifications of sharing information related to personal movement.

There is in fact a moral and legal balance that satisfies the need to protect the privacy of law-abiding citizens, prosecute criminals, and protect family and friends through the use of cell phone tracking all at the same time, and the name we give to that solution is the constitution. Ronald Bailey's article seeks to explore more than just cell phone tracking technology. He delves into the ideas surrounding the tracking of individuals both from a historical context and from people who are involved with the cell phone tracking issue today.

Those sources are from both the government and private sector and each offers arsenal Insights that might allow us to more thoughtfully determine which Is more Important, privacy or the prosecution of criminals. Terry Allen's oracle gives us a much stronger sense that cell phone tracking technology is immoral and will be used for ill. In his article he quotes from a number of sources who are thoroughly against tracking technology whether It Is being used by the government for tracking supposed criminals or a private Individual tracking family members.

Allen makes clear through his own words that he is opposed to cell phone tracking and that he as a disregard for some of the politicians who oversaw a period under which the government began to Implement this unwarranted tracking tactic. In the article written by Ronald Bailey. He references the moral facet with a historical piece about Samuel Beneath and his Pontification tower in which an observer could see any occupant at any time, thereby reducing immoral behavior.

The problem with this tower is that those who are observed change their behavior to be more " moral" because they never know when they are being observed. Bailey also Includes a quote, which also relates to the Pontification tower, by U. S. Supreme Court Justice Sonic Estimator stating that " Awareness that the Government may be watching chills associational and expressive freedoms" (35). In contrast, Terry Allen's article does little to speak to the moral and legal correctness or benefits In even proportions.

Instead, he prefers to speak about the Illegitimacy of the technology and Implies that the use of it is immoral directly. Allen gives us a clear sense that

he is opposed to 1 OFF technology became used more widely. Not only is Allen opposed to government use but he has concerns that private companies will exploit this technology in the same way. Allen Jokingly states that “legality can be so tricky to pin down, especially when national security and corporate profits are involved” (304). It seems that Allen sees the issue as one of a moral corruptness throughout society.

In contrast, Bailey notes that his concern lies primarily with the government and its attempts to circumvent the courts by deploying International Subscriber Identity locators that masquerade as cell towers and enable government agents to suck down data from thousands of subscribers as they hunt for an individual’s cell signal” (34). Bailey expresses that the genealogy is not inherently bad, but that the methods by which it is being used today does show a lack of respect for the constitutional rights of citizens.

Although these two men have different bases for their beliefs they each agree that masses of unwitting citizens, some of whom are not even accused of any crime, are being tracked from a distance by the government and private companies and that there are growing number of abuses by each of these entities that require immediate action. Do not fear my government as a whole, but I do fear that, as the words of the British Astoria Lord Acton “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely’.

Knowing that you may be under surveillance ultimately reduces a person to a slave of sorts. It reduces the subject of the surveillance to the point of acting and performing as surveyor would want it to for fear of the repercussions of any subversive act. We live in a world of constantly evolving

technology, but the moral standard under which we use these new devices and knowledge is rooted in our past. Our societal expectation is that our government acts with a level of integrity

In here citizens are not tracked without cause or due process, and we should demand no less of the private sector with information of such a delicate nature. To demand freedom is to bear some risk of criminality and danger in a society, and it would seem that most Americans are, as they have been for centuries, comfortable with that trade off.