

“Will Privacy Issues Block Development of Personal Satnav Technology?”

We put this big question to the industry - here is a selection of responses.



B. Stahl

Professor of Critical Research in Technology, Centre for Computing and Social Responsibility, De Montfort University.

“Privacy considerations are likely to affect future developments of SatNav technology that are based on personal services. Such services require some sort of identifiable feature and direct link to the user and therefore pose a fundamental risk to privacy. Personalised services promise higher convenience and user satisfaction, but this means that providers need to balance these aims with other aims that users hold and privacy is prime among them. It is important that users understand these issues and are included early on in the design and testing of new personal SatNav technologies if user resistance is to be avoided.”

URL www.cse.dmu.ac.uk



Nick Hunn

Director of WiFore Wireless Consultancy

“Digital Privacy is a Faustian pact. Users have already accepted the trade-off between giving away some of their personal details in return for information, whether that be “real” or easier social networking. Personal location is unlikely to be different. The tabloids will howl when it’s used by the wrong elements of society, but if the pact is suitably balanced the mass market will just get on with it.”

WiFore Wireless Consultancy helps businesses overcome technology barriers to quickly get wireless enabled products to market.

URL www.wifore.com

“The privacy issue has always been a very high priority when designing systems capable of reporting position derived from SatNav”



Bob Cockshott

Director of the Location and Timing Knowledge Transfer Network

“GPS navigation systems do not themselves track you. but privacy is a serious concern when these are combined with other features which report your location. As long as users can control when they are tracked and have confidence that operators will not abuse their data, privacy worries need not limit adoption of personal navigation technology.”

The KTN is a managed network of over 1000 members that fosters innovation in location technologies through collaboration. It is funded by the Technology Strategy Board.

URL www.locationktn.com



Jonathan Raper

Managing Director of Placr Ltd and Professor at City University

“Personal satnav technology will only succeed if it directly addresses user expectations of control over their data. The debate about expression, identity and security of information that has been changed radically by social networks. We now see a generation willing to share unprecedented amounts of information with trusted networks as a key element in their self-expression and identity. Just as people now share imagery and schedules through social networks, then so they will share location.”

Jonathan Raper is Professor of Geographic Information Science at City University and Managing Director of Placr Ltd., a UK startup focused on geospatial mobile solutions.

URL www soi.city.ac.uk



John Pottle

Marketing Director, Spirent Positioning Technology

"My view is that this is probably not the #1 issue, although controls and safeguards will be needed. Today we already get "tracked" by our mobile phone roaming, but it's not a privacy issue for most people. A bigger issue for personal SatNav success is performance indoors and in very challenging urban environments."

Spirent Communications plc is a global provider of integrated performance analysis and service assurance systems that enable the development and deployment of next-generation networking technology such as Internet telephony, broadband services, 3G wireless, global navigation satellite systems, and network security equipment.

URL www.spirent.com

"Personal satnav technology will only succeed if it directly addresses user expectations of control over their data."



Tom Satterthwaite

Senior Product Manager of Ordnance Survey

"In-vehicle information systems are already proving to be useful support for the driver. It's a young industry however and the technologies have not matured yet. So long as privacy is guarded properly, the benefits to all of high volume crowd sourced datasets are potentially huge – but care and attention needs to be spent on communicating these benefits."

Ordnance Survey is Great Britain's national mapping agency, providing the most accurate and up-to-date geographic data, relied on by government, business and individuals.

URL www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk



Armin Fendrich

deCarta -Vice President of Sales for EMEA

"Privacy is not a concern with today's "disconnected" SatNav devices. deCarta is pioneering technology that is connecting SatNav devices to the Internet, thus making available a wide variety of services that deliver relevant information to location-aware devices. SatNavs today allow you to look for a restaurant in an unfamiliar town. deCarta's technology allows you to also look up restaurant reviews, special offers from local participating businesses, etc. We feel location information will be widely used while personal privacy will remain protected."

deCarta has enabled some of the industry's most successful LBS applications (e.g. Verizon, Sprint Nextel, AT&T, T-Mobile, Multimaps and Hotels.com). The company's technology is ideal for high-volume LBS applications in the mobile, personal navigation, connected navigation, enterprise and Internet markets where scalability, speed and reliability are vital.

URL www.decarta.com



Josh Green

Senior Consultant, ITC Global Security Ltd

"Personal Satnav will undoubtedly generate potentially sensitive information such as location and patterns of movement – in effect contributing to the overall identity of the subscriber. Recent news has been awash with tales of mass loss of personal information, and new and inventive use of publicly available information for nefarious purposes. If the industry hopes to continue development of Personal Satnav unabated by issues of privacy, it must give deep consideration to governing the collection and exploitation of consumers' personal identity assets, and to effectively securing those assets."

ITC Global Security Ltd, experts in secure networking, provide information security and advanced networking consultancy, integration and managed services to some of the world's leading organisations. They enable risk management, regulatory compliance and performance challenges to be met.

URL www.itcsecurity.com



Colin Beatty

Managing Director of CBIL and FRIN Vice President of the Royal Institute of Navigation

"The privacy issue has always been a very high priority when designing systems capable of reporting position derived from SatNav. Giving the user the option of allowing their position to be reported should always be a key system feature. Failure to allow users to opt out of position reporting will substantially delay acceptance of this technology."

CBIL was founded by Colin Beatty in 1987 as a global navigation satellite systems consultancy providing bespoke solutions to Navigation and Survey customers. Since then the company has represented some of the leading manufacturers in the industry.

URL www.cbil.co.uk



Derek McAuley

Director of Horizon and Professor at the University of Nottingham

"Yes, if we proceed naively and start shipping around highly detailed location and journey records; however, perhaps we should just be a bit smarter. For example, a range of new services can be based on sharing only approximated, anonymized and aggregated data, designed to prevent re-identification, where only the local application on the device needs access to the private data."

Horizon is a RCUK funded Digital Economy Hub at Nottingham. It focuses on the role of 'always on, always with you' ubiquitous computing technology in the Digital Economy.

URL www.nottingham.ac.uk

A media event on in-car satellite navigation organised by the Location and Timing Knowledge Transfer Network, with expert panellists from leading industry and academic organisations sparked the question for this new GeoConnexion section.

Contact the Editor for future events or questions to be considered for next issues.