

UC Browser secretly collects browsing data of iPhone users

Recently, security researcher Gabi Cirlig discovered that UC Browser (a fairly popular mobile browser) was secretly sending iPhone users' browsing data to servers in China.

The collected data even includes IP addresses, which can be used to track the approximate location of the user.

UC Browser is developed by UCWeb, a subsidiary of Alibaba (China). This is one of the most popular mobile browsers in Asia, with over 500 million downloads on Google Play alone.



According to security researcher Gabi Cirlig, UC Browser silently sent iPhone users' browsing data (even with incognito mode enabled) to UCWeb servers (registered in China, but located in the US). This is in stark contrast to the company's previous statement, which does not record a user's 'browsing history and search history' when incognito mode is activated.

More worryingly, UC Browser also collects IDs (unique identifiers) to track users across various websites. The collection of user data happens on both Android and iOS versions, not sure what UCWeb is doing with all this information?

'This kind of tracking is done on purpose,' Cirlig told Forbes. When compared with Google Chrome browser and some other popular browsers, he found there is no browser like UC Browser.

UC Browser just rolled out a new update last week, but the company never mentioned monitoring users' browsing activity.

Currently the English version of UC Browser has been removed from the App Store, but the Chinese version still exists, and unlike the English version, it does not send data back to the UCWeb server.

Earlier in 2019, the UC Browser version for Android also violated Google Play's policies.

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